

1992
Australia's magazine of the performing arts

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Theatre Australia

John Waters Interview

Australian Shakespeare

Quentin Crisp

The Home

Comprehensive Review Section

including film, ballet, opera,

television, books, National

Guide.



JOHN WATERS
as
DRACULA -

BERKOFF
SPEAKS
OUT

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Centrepoint Theatre Palmerston North
Tuesday 10-Saturday 14 October
Court Theatre Christchurch
Friday 20 and Saturday 21 October
Downstage Theatre Wellington
Tuesday 24-Saturday 28 October
Fortune Theatre Dunedin



Theatre

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COMMENT

They're not making a song and dance about it, but the Melbourne Theatre Company is celebrating its 25th Anniversary this year. In 1959 the Union Theatre Repertory Company started life at the University of Melbourne and played out at first six years as the Union Theatre. Australia's oldest professional repertory company has come a long way since those days, and in spite of a certain amount of criticism of its management by Melbourne theatre must be counted the largest and most successful live theatre company — particularly in view of what is happening to the Sydney organisations like the Old Tote, the year.

1971 was a year of some concern for the MTC — and some expectation. It expected the Australian Theatre, a theatre more the size of either Russell Street or St Martin's in which they were presently playing. It was apparent from a column I had written which had record as a mainly unsuccessful iron smelter, and for a time the MTC was playing in three of Melbourne's theatres at once. The venture was a risky one and depended for its success on substantially bigger audiences, but the season of Saxon/Lewis' *Disturbance*, of which Saxon's *Member of Parliament* was the biggest draw, proved the effort and expense was worthwhile.

Last year the new MTC's new headquarters were complete enough for them to move into, this was a large warehouse in South Melbourne converted into administration, rehearsal studios, building, costume making and storage space at a cost of hundreds of thousands of dollars to the Victorian Government. There were some dark comparisons made at the time between the architect's original building, and questions posed as to whether the would lead to a manufacturing rather than theatrical solution to company.

So far this doesn't appear to have been so. 1971 has turned out to be one of the most successful years, in artistic critical and box office terms that the MTC has ever had. John Saxon the founder and continuing artistic director saw through his post-war changes and is away on long term leave this year. The improved critical response in '71 may be due to a fresh and often innovative approach to production, but there is also the possibility of personal, if unconscious, personal press antagonism towards Saxon himself, that is in his capacity as a director.

For all the consternation John Saxon has faced in his running of the company, the contribution and value of the MTC is very much due to him. Of all successive directors in this country he is to do the longest and most assured role, and must be deemed the most successful. He continues after retirement with artistic direction in a way that few others have matched. Even at Nundah these responsibilities are divided between three directors and a general manager.

In the absence of an artistic director, Mark Rodgers, with Ray Lovell, is the man who has born more or less at the helm of the Melbourne Theatre Company this year. His previous productions for the company have been generally laudable — notably last year's *Alibi* at St Martin's — and in March he mounted further based *A Streetcar Named Desire* with the style of MTC classical productions. Currently he is Ayrton's *Am Herzen* (Ghosts) running at Russell Street and *Disturbance* in the Athenaeum. Rodgers' artistic directorship is somewhat in demand having just been appointed Artistic Director of the Playwrights' Conference for the second year running — the first time this has happened in the history of the Conference. The other new director of the year seems also to be another choice for the MTC. Paul Hansen's two productions have gone down more than well, and Bruce Mylne is proving to good a director as he is actor.

The MTC has moved sharply to the business of encouraging new writers in 1970 with an obesity-mitigated Tribune Production. From April 1971 Alexander has been running this programme which gives readings and workshops to new work from Australia and overseas, particularly that which is innovative in style. Many of this year's season have come either directly from the Playwrights Conference or from writers who have previously been involved with it, so perhaps Mark Rodgers' involvement with both in playing dividends at last.

Critic formation has also been happening through writing. The Club which can be a rival to the Society of Authors is picked leaders in Russell Street for next year in Tasmania. And Garry Fox and ICI was not taken over by, but produced in conjunction with, Paradise Productions — especially for the purpose of a non-craft role.

The award season for 1971 looks well for the continuing progress of the MTC. The choice of plays runs from Beckett's *The Death of a Salesman* to *Amour et Colère*, taking in David Alcott's *Cost With Fury*, and a couple of recent West End successes.

The MTC is planning a massive exhibition to coincide with the tenth anniversary, but it looks as though this will be postponed. In an equally quiet way that month Century Press celebrates its tenth year of operation. With a hefty stock list in Melbourne they are marking the occasion with their first exhibition and Century is offering reading rights to theatre and drama groups of eleven cities at cost price. To defend anything in Australia they include Williamson's *Cost Party* and *Playful* of Fremantle Drama Theatre and Roberts' *The Mourning World*. It's also *Theatre Australia*'s second birthday, and so set there are Voltage there.

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TOPSPOTLIGHT



John Waters as Dracula

Photo: French Press

John Waters — the new Dracula

Jill Sykes

Why is John Waters in every Australian film? asked a friend the other day.

He isn't, of course. But he does turn up in television and various screenings with happy regularity — *Rushmore*, *The Curse of Broken Glass*, *Breakfast of Shadows* in the last three years alone plus a couple of televisions already seen and two more in the can. Now he is looking for what should be Australia wide exposure on stage as Dracula for the much lauded monster of the film, the original *campy* *Dracula* of the London stage.

The \$10,000 production which opens at His Majesty's Theatre in Sydney on August 11 is being directed along the lines of the current Broadway hit by Sir Robert Helpmann for P.C. Williamson Productions and Michael Tilley International.

Last October when Waters' *Dracula* was revived in New York, earning enough of superlatives from the critics, Waters' wife had seen the New York production, says it is

aptly styled and has an amazing collection of special effects. "The original Victorian setting has been moved to the 1920s," he said. "There have only been minor changes of character. There are interludes like 'Boring, your daughter here' and 'I stupid, vulgar and everyone'. It walks on a razor edge in such subtleties as those going over the top. It maintains a feeling of believability as well as being very funny and played with great wit. It has music, but it is in no way a musical. The music is more like a film score — dramatic punctuation music. 'Dracula' is a romantic figure, very attractive, a romantic being. Every character supported with grace."

To get back to my friend's original question, the reason that John Waters is as dressed as an actor would seem to be the shabby and intelligent way which he approaches his job and his strong, almost regal looks. He says he doesn't go around frequently chasing career opportunities and one certainly wouldn't suspect his various working patterns came about by chance, though when he talks about his career that's what it sounds like.

He was born in England thirty-one years ago and brought up there. His father is an actor and son John fell into the business without even thinking about it. "When I was coming up to junior school, I was desperate to try other things. Acting wasn't a burning instinct — yet it was something I knew I could probably end up doing." He worked in various little gigs — temporary jobs like moving houses — and was obviously a person who took odd jobs to keep himself going. In 1980/81, he was bass guitar and singer with a pop group, the Red Squad. We're talking 5 pounds each for a gig.

"My first professional thought pitch came in 1985 at the Richmond Theatre, which was close to where I lived. It was a series of Shakespeare plays. I was an assistant stage manager who carried a spear. Then I spent a year in France, selling postcards on the French beachfront."

"I have never changed my approach to life. I still consider that I am just taking what comes up. I now have other people like agents to plan my career. But if work suddenly stopped — and every actor faces that possibility — I would simply do something else. I am not minded when I am out of work, though I am a little bit fidgety."

I wondered if he was at all worried about over exposure with such a successful career career. "I

think it is very good timing for me to do a play now," he replied. "I suppose I have reached a non-satiric point with movies, though I really don't think there is a real problem with over-exposure, less because there are still feeling among Australian audiences that you get lost in a particular character. When I was doing *House*, you could go past in two episodes with only two weeks between them, whereas in England there has to be a separation of something like two months. There is a smaller pool of actors there, so they are forced to come up more often. In England, if you want a middle-aged, bespectacled doctor, you can pick him and there are hundreds of them."

In the ten years since he arrived in Australia on a \$10 pounds返航 passage, starting to straightforwardly two year working holiday here, he has done shows like *Hair*, *Desperately Seeking Susan* and *Well and Little* and *Play*, *Godspell* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, all of them requiring his unique talents. As a straight actor, he has done television series such as *Murder on the Orient Express*, *Citizen Flanagan* and *The Big Country*, turned up by chance with a couple of songs on *Mary Poppins* pleasure — he likes her as the monitor in the ABC, and she awards him stars.

And then there have been plays, but most of them are quite a long way back. His last at the most recent stage appearance — with the Old Town in *Clueless* last year. He has a closing stage presence, but it seemed odd to see him as a distant figure framed by a proscenium when you're meant to respond to that handily sorted face magnified in close up on a movie screen.

"The visual techniques of film and stage are so different," Waters continues. "This requires you just up your thoughts, whereas there has to be projected and physiologically on stage. I think the energy level required for *Dracula* is about all a musical energy. He is rather about for scenes managed before he appears and when he does, he starts right up there. He has to measure when. Stage work means a very disciplined, almost conscious, existence. Physical fitness and endurance are prime requirements from making a very rigorous trip but when you are doing a play your concentration and big effort is separated into four hours, and your whole day is geared in that. You have to stop thinking and not think in thinking."

He sighed意味fully as he rolled himself another cigarette.

Quentin Crisp — an artist in life

John Byrne

"Could you meet him for lunch darling? I'm afraid it's the only time left."

Richard James, PR for Quentin Crisp's current tour of Australia had no need to be apologetic — it is not everyday that one can meet a legend in his own lifetime. Legend is, of course, overstating it a bit, but perhaps Mr Crisp has more claim to it than many others in the age of the annual hyperbole, where epithets of "unquestionably outstanding" and the like are thrown around his conduct. In a very few short years he has risen from almost total obscurity to a cultic and iconic mould after *Policeman Civil Servant* of his books on his present celebrity, at least in Britain and, I am sure, will be able to say, in Australia before he is through. Not that he has had an overnight success, for he has been writing years putting his show together. Arranged resolutions of the course of action do tend to take a little longer to prepare themselves, yes?

We can discount the fact that he looks, how to have it, likeable was teleported to the advertisement-oriented States of America as a boy to look for loans? We can even laugh at Mr Crisp's surprise that his other book, *Love Made Easy* was badly received in New Zealand "when I thought they would be glad of anything." The fact is that Quentin Crisp at his one man show, described as "an exercise in civilized debate," gathered the sort of critical acclaim by hand to please West End critics that make front of house managers beam with pride and bring out the sandwich boards.

Mr Crisp turned a few heads as we walked down from Sydney's Theatre Royal to our transports and bags, but no more. In the London of the '70s it was a different matter. Then full English-type revolutions of the heart were the rule, followed by above and others, physical shock. Effeminate homosexuals with beads and dyed hair painted male and courageous clothes were not acceptable then but, now the world has caught up with him in many ways. His etiennes of course of the times, referring to his nonconformism then and now. Then no less at all was a "kind of triumph" and he was soon off on the poverty bus. Today he is widely accepted and based on his own terms and in becoming increasingly relevant of material want. The power of money is important to him however: "only wealth can prevent us from remaining a victim." He has some "theoretical regard" for no materialism — in his mind such feelings are not productive and besides "they spoilt our looks."

The appearance today is rather like that of a benevolent, maternal figure; the hair is soft, slightly thin; he has discreetly made up with



Quentin Crisp

creams-based eye liner. He does one speech with a pale pink resin and apart from a stylized black chapbook in the style of the great English eccentrics, particularly like an older country draper's belt his clothing consists and is rather conservative like his tie makes no sacrifice that he could almost get away with having ties and tiny cuffs with the Ray Ford Seal?

It is a gentle piece by today's standards where not only pop performers glorify an antisexist vision of pretty and purple hair, bizarre facial decoration and vast amounts of jewellry placed on parts of the anatomy where even he had not thought to place it. In short the young cannot really understand what his struggle was all about.

There will be many, I am sure, who will argue he has passed the various points of value but this is way off the mark. He point of view is quite simply his own and it wasn't nothing particularly so either way. He is an academic of sorts. Nor is his show aimed at a homosocial audience. Moreover, much this show may interest us as a predominant part of his professional theme at all unless the audience turns it in that direction during question time which comes in part two after his talk on style.

To Mr Crisp, style is all and nothing else matters. He knows the lack of options in the world today — the handicrafts (most carry their wives) the Eva Perons, the leaders. Dostoevskii says that it is but justifiably so no much freedom. The sort of individualism we see today is no good gods, rock groups type but grinded on from the many alternative lifestyle choices from asceticism and素食ism. It is not a direct and unavoidable consequence of what one really is. Mr Crisp had no such choice forced to be himself" he forged out his lifestyle accordingly. He is here, as the champion of individuals, the "princeps" for any other

kind of life for a gay, women or whatever to suggest ways in which we may forge our own kind of individualities and be happy with ourselves. It is not for us a question of seeking ways in which to be different from other people, but rather one of being more like ourselves. To "wot from the outside?" the only rule.

The most striking in an unforgettable message of the great staginess and his singular approach may be suited to the intellectuals, you know and name me two individuals whose lifestyle you envy but I can assure you that in his hands it has a terrible meaning and application that will surprise, provide and make you think. It may sound like a pretty heavy warning in the theatre but this is my fault. Few have the ability to speak with a seriousness in an interesting way. Mr Crisp has it. "I don't have to be boring in order to be believed," and again quoting Byrne, just because I'm writing doesn't mean I don't mean what I say.

At the same time how he was put about in New York Broadway where he opened his Australian tour ten below the left he faced no question at a performance of *Death of a Salesman* that he might run in to the psyche of Ode. He did expect a certain amount of bad day in the Queensland capital though it is certainly not his intention to offend. He was however not entirely nervous — "I have nothing to lose. I understand that there is a lot here a large amount of terrible. Bloody one to mention although patient, tolerance and beauty being characterized Mr Crisp meant life. It would be very inspiring if the audience at H M Theatre in Broome did not change as I did from my audience with the genuine feeling that they had me a remarkable and very likable man. In fact if he was appearing here in Kalgoorlie would undoubtedly nominate him for the year's national living literature award.



Playwrights Discovered

Richard Murphett

In February the Australian Performing Group arrived in the national tour for playwrights to apply for their script development grants of \$2,000 each, payable by Literature Board funding. The aim was to assist the writer as much as possible in areas the creation of scenes with an ensemble, but limited my experience as writing for the theatre, as well as those with completed scripts. By the time we were asked for under-completed scripts or synopses, with the condition that the writer had nothing and able to work with the group on developing the play if this was necessary, and therefore no editorial help in development of the script or ideas about this constraint acted as a spur to the majority of the group. As you never know a town in Western Australia just in case I had the time, for hours, if you haven't had a guess at the answer. And the failures and problems, evident in most of the writing were largely a result of lack of working knowledge of how life, through the material in his action. This led to either an emotionally perverted obsession in psychology or a dualistic question and answer dialogue, which gets the theoretical while systematically frustrating the play or loss of depth of character and plot which obvious the central spark of all else. What these writers need is contact with a theatre, ensemble or a shared focus on their work performance. Of the playwrights we have chosen only one, has had a full length play professionally produced before, and only one has completed as much as a first draft of a projected full play.

There was great diversity of style and content in the work submitted — from short comedies to historical pageants, from Bush Rivalry to the Outback. But there was also a lot of familiar ground covered in numerous ways and some, though not many, too ambitious for a few relatively inexperienced theatre companies.

The recipients of the grants are:

Barry Dickson for his play *Poor's Shoe Master*. Mr Dickson's plays have been performed at La Mama and the Prism Factory under previous funding. And a Shoe Master is a book that has been lost and stolen. It contains a revised, better comic, a revised script or not, a revised book version, a walking dog and other lost and paraphrases of the wonders of the world. "It is a world of computers performing surgery with nanoscale pliers in solid graphite, benders are generated by hot and heated concrete, and pretty obviously of old age". As Mr Dickson says, "There is nothing as sad as isolation and an improvement in a dinner pork sausage at three in the morning". Poor's Shoe Master will be presented at the Prism Factory in August/September this year.

Stephen Stowell has his play *The Dead Blood*. Mr Stowell is a Queensland writer who has had a play produced recently at the Prism. The Dead Blood is based on the history of political revolutionaries shortly after revolution which have destroyed the theory and practice of the party and resulting in Asia an anarchist peasant fighters and Alexander, a young Bolshevik activists on the run from the Russian secret police and caught in a trap in Nazi occupied Northern Russia in 1941. The play is incomplete but the material is based on documents, an encoder can be the dead of someone else and all the play set and sharp angles that it displays in terms of arms. The Dead Blood will be presented at the Prism early next year.

We split the third grant between:

Stephen Maturin has his planned play *My Life My Children*. Mr Maturin's first play *Phoebe* was shown at the Prism in 1978. In My Life My Children he is engaged with the huge change that the second world war wrought on Australian family life, particularly on Australian women who were forced to find and spread the offices of the last colonial sugar mill was not from Britain and that had stupendously impact — Australian cultural migration.

Terry Maher has his planned play *West to Come*. Mr Maher is a Melbourne, geologist. Based in Coopey he deals with white collar crime and the highs and lows of an asbestos thermometer. A kind of middle class urban corruption, tragedy is modified not too closely in the rise and fall of one of our major financial consumers.

These two plays will also be presented at the Prism next year. In addition we are negotiating with several other writers, with a view to full production of their work or its inclusion in public workshops and playreading performances planned for 1990.

The stage development grants make an essential process of what the ATP does all its time — the reading and discussion of new material. The process was simple and the rewards substantial. And we hope that for these emerging writers with whom we have an extended or has been relationship, of his or hers, than shaking dust out of old worn scripts or bringing long-ago-revived values to an fast life, fast time.



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You win some...

Richard Fotheringham on Queensland's reaction to the Popular Theatre Troupe.

It was a quarter to eight in the morning, and the radio was blaring from a private number where no one would overhear. "The police were in yesterday asking for information about the Popular Theatre Troupe," the radio said. "I thought you ought to know."

A year later another phone call. Some of our members had performed in a Civil Liberties Rally in Brisbane's Festival Hall. The rally at last was the Queensland Department of Cultural Affairs' response, taking it that we were the company which had been involved. It was the only rally the Queensland Government had approached as its key subject, and in April this year the token amount \$10000 was extracted from their education officer's budget.

In response our problems moved to Glebeboro in 1976. The Amalgamated Metal Workers Union had asked us if we could perform after an early morning stop working at the Alcan refinery. It seemed appropriate time for show *The Millionaire Headshop* dealt with the treatment of along all people by the City York aluminium smelter companies so we agreed. It was one of our first moments, taking up a flag while a thousand men stood nearby discussing their dispute with the company and who they'd voted to strike, finding that 800 of them were prepared to endure striking for another three quarters of an hour to wash our show before going home.

The repercussions were immediate. The local Catholic press suggested a locking out deal made us less fit for a public performance, we were suddenly denied access to the powerhouses where a show had been arranged and elsewhere, Queensland's local company influenced officials who had heard off us and who went out of their way to obstruct our right to perform to their workers. Seven weeks later, the first victim of police surveillance disappeared.

The Popular Theatre Troupe is an eight member professional theatre company based in Brisbane which began in 1973 with the original production of *The White Slave Market*, a study of racism in Australia directed by Albert Herst.

It was just a Monday morning when what was planned a daydream and personal greatest, and pure variety show, where Aborigines were typed out of their land and sentenced to death. The celebrated production was the Troupe an invitation to perform in the

1976 Australia Festival of the Arts, and later had a successful London season.

In October they did receive play about women in the workforce, a male actor performed a major role.

Between Now & Then carefully saw the way. Notice that a few no hands needed hidden in the long, and nothing up the sleeve. This is because it is a piece made by a female writer. Notice also the crooked staircase, the threadbare collar, and the upturning of the hair. Note that there is nothing in this line. (There do speak about a rabbit just past) Realising that it always a thin silly situation, why believe women should have the same right to work as men? (These don't help!) There is now nothing in the line. I place the coat on the hat, and around there



Popular Theatre Troupe: Millionaire Headshop

they say the stage words "Join us men only there more money for men only" and they proto-gothic our new coat. Straight stitching, a soft collar and sturdy fabric, because it's a coat made by a male actor! Everyone applauds except the female author and the employees agree to applaud each other's mockery!

This short scene is a good example of the way in which the Popular Theatre Troupe has tried to keep themselves and contemporary audiences in terms of popular entertainment. Because we're needed whenever possible formal theatre with all their strict disciplines, we've had to dress non-stop entertainment strong enough to hold an audience in the changing surroundings of a worker's barbershop or a prison compound. And since we're stuck our faces constantly need giving obvious offence by the use of bad language and saying no political party we've tried to have the courage to position anywhere in sight.

But it is also true that our shows are factual representations of some of the more hideous aspects of Australian life and if they work in

they should then they will threaten people whose connected interests and prosperity depends on the suppression of these facts. The White Slave Market for example deeply threatened the people in a hotel corner existing in the central Queensland town of Emerald. They'd just recently solved their aboriginal problem by having the police stand up every block at town and putting down on a gun to Moan the. They were paid a representative of the show — of \$500 and take open offence at good quality presentations — and it was only what we tried to average a notice was a year later that a sympathetic told us why we'd met with a blank refusal.

You have a few you won a line. We were doing *The Amalgamated Headshop* for a Permanent League meeting in Glebeboro. We were waiting to begin and the permanent meeting was taking place. A firm and nervous stiff old lady was talking again (not unusual) of state and federal governments to provide funds for the League. Senator Coates' Diaries — which she exclusively dismissed as "Very interesting" — got unanimous funding, but Permanent League got not one penny. A fellow after, who'd earlier expressed some reservation about performing our play in such circumstances suddenly turned and said to me: "The thing I keep forgetting" he said "is that the world really isn't the way they try to tell you it is."

If the work of the Popular Theatre Troupe is socially committed, as communists it backed up by this fact: If we're subjective then it follows to conclude the way that people shouldn't buy their social problems a one way rail takes one of ours. In Queensland their suffering cause to be shamed, ignored, locked out, slandered, persecuted, defamed, spied upon, and economically crippled. Potentially it also to be applauded, supported, challenged, exposed and endorsed.

Richard Fotheringham has been a writer and director with the Popular Theatre Troupe since its inception.

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QUOTES & QUESTIONS



ROCKY HORROR HORRORS?

Queensland Theatre is feeling a shock. The well-known Major Company has suddenly seen the shrapnel in the community's hand. The Popular Theatre Trustee has had to issue a press statement that the Queensland Theatre Company's controversial tobacco programme was withdrawn by the Education Department and endorsed amongst other complications twelve teachers from Moreton said that the editor from *Qlda* suggested parents! What put even those sceptics in the shade was the sudden collapse of the Rocky Horror Show with the Fraud Squad being called in and a lot of innocent people suddenly finding themselves liable for huge unpaid bills.

The inarticulate facts are these: Rocky Horror was staged by Q & M Productions at the old Radio Theatre in Brisbane's suburb of West End, opening on May 10 for a six-week minimum run. The show was directed by Daryl Noyce, and provided work for many of Queensland's unemployed actors and technicians. There were doubts about the financial merits of the production early in the season when audience figures for first-decades-by-borrowed-a-bit were so dismal and horrendous. The actors were paid for the first four weeks of the run, but were told on the Friday of the fifth week that they wouldn't be paid that day. The show folded the next Monday and a meeting of creditors on Tuesday 13th June began in peace together the inevitable story.

Apparently Q & M Productions was formed by Graham McLochrie who was also Producer, Manager at the Queensland Theatre Company. He claimed to have southern backers — allegedly two French firms

who'd put in only a thousand dollars, or so each. He also alleged that McCleod featured the venture by using a Queensland Theatre Company usher book to get credit, and told several QTAC personnel that the Queensland Theatre Company had "OK'd" their involvement. McCleod was given leave of absence from the QTAC and was later sacked.

The costliest evening per Q & M total didn't go at a very conservative \$20,000, with \$10,000 being increased as a more realistic figure. The QTAC is the major creditor, other financial losses are Harry M Miller (English, Radio Station 4WP) advertising; the Queensland Ballet (costumes), the Radio owners (lost) the passes for the incredibly lavish champagne and hors d'oeuvre opening night, the actors and technicians, and those who'll paid for advance bookings.

McCleod has left town. It looks like the unscrupulous man up for the picking.

HALF A TICK

HELEN HAAG

"The idea started in America, when Stephen was in New York last year to witness the opening of Times Square as launching pad for half price tickets for that city's performances and I thought what a good idea it was. It has been slow taking off in Sydney starting last September. Everyone who has seen it thinks it's the best thing that ever happened, but we can't advertise until we're making more money. The train we have done has worked very well. It would be financially viable if we went down drastic the business we are now.

We cater for those theatres who can't afford the current prices — and there are a lot of them. We ring the theatres at eleven o'clock each morning to find out who would take them and allow us to sell at half price for that night's performance. On Friday we do it for the whole weekend. The only ones who don't want us on are the Australian Ballet — although they don't have full houses every day, and the Royal Opera. We've been at the MLC centre who have very kindly found us a room, and now we're at the Maxfield Theatre. Half A Tick is ready to constituency service, to tourists as well. What we make out of it is the editorial looking for."

THE UMBRA/THE CONTRACT CONTROVERSY

KEITH GALLASCH, Chairman of ACT

Allegedly the revisionist R & F play by Ken Campbell and Chris Langham was to be staged by the ABC in the State or the 1978 Festival of Arts in all tell through SA's Association of Community Theatres intended to entertain this year in places at least four new plays by

ACT member groups and writers on the Spot. However Tim Firth of the Festival Centre suggested that ACT undertake discussions if possible using Campbell as director and that the Centre would back the whole deal. It was at this stage a generous offer towards the amateur and semi-professional members of ACT, but when John Kelly of the Studio Mad reported that negotiations were under way to get Campbell out here negotiations began to fact. In advanced he added that the Festival Centre was not happy with the standard of previous ACT seasons in the Spot. Not surprisingly Tim demanded a great deal of work from local theatre people. In the meantime ACT unanimously decided to go ahead with its original plan and therefore reject Firth's offer, thinking a better to both local groups and local playwrights at home (1) than SA, playwrights in Boarding and also from the names Ken Ross, David Allen, Michaela Pucci, Rob George, and Steve Spears all of whom have had great prior support from ACT and its members and (2) when it has become increasingly expensive for groups to mount productions even given the Federal Government's generous amateur theatrical scheme. Kelly's response in the Mail is all of that was a charge of machination and he responded to comments with (i) Alan Roberts account in the *Advertiser* of a "series of good local plays" and (ii) Actor's Equity giving two important motions through the local ALP conference both supported by Donatus Lee Society member Blundell and both in support of local alternative theatre. Add in all of this a dash of local hostility to the dominance of the drama scene by English present last medaling the aforementioned critical particularly in the SABC and you have an understandably toxic situation. Contrary to the position of Roberts and Kelly ACT feels that there is a great potential in the local theatre scene which needs nurturing and seeing that ACT is the only organization in SA seriously concerned with local writing, it will continue to aid in that nurturing allowing writers to have plays more developed and produced than allowing them to starve and the opportunity to learn through mistakes.

SACKCLOTH AND SWEAT

MURRAY COPLAND

"It's exciting to be given a chance to rethink and re-direct my great *Grieggels* for the Melbourne Theatre Company. I know there were many who saw my original production at the 1974 Adelaid Festival who felt, as I did, that Robert French Johnson's banal assemblage of ten amazingly different roles — ladies as well as gents — deserved to be far more

widely seen. How fortunate we are that Robert is available for our spot in August which is when David Bowes, of the MTC's regular company, has just enough time free between shows to repeat its eleven performances at the other half of the many two-month runs. Those who think of David as typically the hard-nosed jive head are in for a surprise when they're enthralled by his marvellous appearance in *Gospoyin* — for what its critics have in mind is not only the most courageous stage in the most carelessly bawdy reaches of modern European drama but the largest single history of Peter Schreier.

The production won't be, by any means, a carbon copy of my Australian original. It will be the first full production mounted in the old Art Gallery翼 of the Afternoon Theatre — the space which the MTC's visiting and touring programme of Theatre Productions has much in view. So the scenes of *Gospoyin* can be even more intimate and intimate than before, and it would be my intent, given again by the way, those who are schedule had better stay away — the modernists would be very much satisfied and would be in the heavens. After all these are supposed to be bawdry entertainments drawing up an audience from a round medieval rock.

Several people have already asked me if the costumes will be as seen in last time. I can make no promise but if I do our best."

FIRST OF SPECTACULAR TO EDINBURGH

JOHN STRADLOW, Director, Triad Stage Anthems.

"We are a company based in Adelaide which specialises at performing to children and young people. Our work has been invited to be performed in schools and various other organisations of movement, but of course, varying the types of recovery, fairly basic concerning. To date we have performed two plays to primary age children, the stories of *All About Adam* and *Abelard and Heloise*. Shakespearean plays we have selected children, certainly we are performing a new look poetry reading to teenagers which uses many of the techniques of our past work plus a few surprises into the area of tape. The company was formed in 1975 as a result of a Schools Commission grant, which has been virtually the only grant of any size we have received. Recently we were invited by the Arts Council thanks to the interest of Arnold Drents in our work, which is directly in the area of control.

We are performing at the Edinburgh Fringe this year, and have been informed by the Administrator, Mr Alan Mollie, that we are the first Australian company to do so. We are financing ourselves in that situation — as indeed in all others — and are anxious to know the response our work will receive in a more or less formalised setting like the Fringe. The two children's

plays are being done as a double bill — *An Australian Night Spectacular* with the poetry reading giving a couple of intermissions."

TOTE TRUCK

RAY RICHARDSON

Tote Truck Theatre, based at the Seymour Entertainment Centre, University of Sydney, is presenting an integrated programme on the theme of "Multi-Cultural Australia" in secondary schools. Free workshop programmes for migrant children and training at Dulwich Hill and De La Salle Maristville. Performances of two Australian plays, *Nigel Trott in the Juke* and *Alice Blue's Name And Always*, which both deal with rural problems, are used to stimulate discussion and follow-up work in schools. *Barbers' Blues* tour carried further programme with three per PSEA students invited. *Quigley* The play, about a Jewish immigrant family arriving at the time of Federation, will be presented by the company at least twice in 1979.

The company will visit Adelaide in August for the MADTE and UNIMA conferences and Brisbane in October for a Theatre in Education festival. In September, Mary Farnhamay and the TROMIE THE team from South Australia are being brought to Sydney to lead a schools and drama priority programme for *Tote Truck Theatre*. The company is running *Theatre Workshop*, University of Sydney with a Saturday series for kids in October December. The company has also worked in youth centres, community centres and for overseas courses with the NSW Department of Education.

A second year has been brought together to create unique drama workshop programmes and performances specially for the Five Weeks series of the year. For both companies, the new members employed have been chosen for both their theatrical and educational expertise. 1979 is both a busy and a productive year for the company."

BUNNY FOR KRAKERJAX

ALAN GANCI, Kraljevian Drama School

Kraljevian Drama School is the result of Alan Ganci's daughter Angela's great wish to appear in the playhouse which started when she was four and continued in these years. When he started looking round for somewhere Angela could learn drama he came up against a great brick wall. Eventually he met two young people in their twenties who agreed to come out to Kraljevian Hills and teach Angela and anyone who wanted to come along. Things didn't go so well that he converted the rump room into a studio for the children, and every week the studio began to open an extra window. A few months later they were able to raise nearly \$2,000 in sales, equipment, donations, and sponsorships, money not there were used for the ever increasing number of parents to which their children are from the writing room as to attend enthusiastically the bulk

Last April Krakerjax was delighted to accept one of Australia's best known TV directors and actresses as Directors of the School, Shirley Brooks. She teaches there and founded her studios, made up of equal numbers of children teenagers and adults, in their mostly classes Krakerjax charges very little for the classes, they are well within the reach of the average family living in the area and Brooks runs since 1976. In the short time of disseminated students from Krakerjax have appeared on television in live shows and have been successful in Fratiplets. Roslyn Hills Council recently offered the School the use of its North Rocks Community Centre free of charge so the school can put on a play for the Shire annual festival, directed by Shirley Brooks the play will be *Our Town*.

ETHNIC MUSIC ASSISTANCE

JAMES MURDOCH, National Director of the Australian Music Centre.

"Mr Francis Pearson has just been appointed to the newly created position of Ethnic Music Promotion Officer. The Australian Music Centre's function is generally to promote and assist in the development of music in Australia, in particular Australian composers and musicians and it has been active in collecting recordings and presenting concerts of ethnic music.

There are many fine Australian musicians of migrant backgrounds largely unknown outside their own communities where music is part of strong and existing traditions. Without some assistance the fine musicians in continuing the music industry — organisations, festivals, recording companies, the media — opportunities to hear the music and for the continuity and growth of these traditions, will be lost. The appointment is on a salary basis, and Mr Pearson will spend time in each state contacting community groups and individual musicians.

Francis Pearson has a wide experience with the media and music organisations in Australia who researched and compiled the recent publication *Directory of Australian Music Organisations* as well as practical experience in organising ethnic music concerts. His role will be to act as a桥梁 between musicians who want to find wider audiences for their music and established organisations."

HIFELMANN TAKES OVER TOTE

GAIL TURNBULL, Chairman of the Tote (See Robert Holmes, *Australia's most distinguished theatrical son of all time*, has been appointed Artistic Director of the Tote Theatre Company Sydney. He will have complete creative authority at the Tote and also had been appointed as a member of the Company's Board.

While it is true that recently we have talked with a number of other people about the position

(Continued on page 44)



Dear Sir

Thank you for your *Designing Minds* display in your June issue. However I would like to point out that the display credited to Carol Powers for Commons designs for ABC's *Ben Holt* should have been credited to Carol Maclean and Peter Hollingshead should have been credited for photographs.

Yours sincerely

Aileen Carpenter
Administrator, S.A.P.A.
(Designers Association for the Performing Arts)

Dear Sir,

MIDA like a great white God in the righteous, you over Christian enlightened of Peter Carey and the cold rationality of George Whaley has now in its giant hand whisked out an apology from *Theatre Australia* for printing an article which already dangled in MIDA's crimson jaws; presumably apparently the accompanying article granting the piece was permitted!

I find that implications based doesn't present argument and conflict so necessary in Australian theatre now — this is all rather disturbing. MIDA needs a large part of the world.

Re Star's article "But what about the ingredients" reliant on the experience of one particular person her MIDA audience is sorely justifiable. I wish my objective had been more defined in writing the article, rather than the touchy-feely of writing to "hi-ho", because she did touch valid points. None of which were answered in either Peter Carey or George Whaley's replies. She was either blithely perched such as "bed form".

Whaley claimed the "distorted the facts". The "facts" are not points off on a clean sheet of paper absolutely knowing the positions the way in sections as logical as this. But facts are those she experienced and I fully believe Whaley to doing the possibility of her experience however might be misconceived has a should not happen.

Can I also say here that by the sound of it these audience perceptions George Whaley has not had an generally liberating in their aid by the more advanced and honest drama schools in England. I have participated in many an rehearsal and later onlooker. Some were run by people whose motives I thoroughly respect. Even these students were at times formulate and totally questionable, at other times, worked brilliantly — reflecting nothing more like the relative nature of we humans, and words like "standards" and "obliges". It indicates that all one particular acting school can in turn people to the norms and standards it sets up

and. Those who don't get it, don't fit — that's all. Australia's tragedy is that MIDA is the most main school (perhaps a small challenge from the Victorian College of the Arts is seen as evidence in this country). As the change in the MIDA's "norms" and "standards" become obvious, then the place looks the ignorant and cerebral faculty attack it would not make more real alternative to MIDA. So the defensive "breaking out" is a cancellation of attack.

I am not negating or dismissing MIDA as a school. In fact if Whaley has my respect for the practical and concerned changes he is, I believe bringing to the place. And I can understand his desire to get away from just that single flat point. (There was the other article).

Re Bob's response anti-social

She describes basically types who have audience anywhere. She is angry at the use of MIDA, since students who take the main open sessions. A valid point but valid. I have written this the last week. That "I've made it specific and you haven't yet" article, is however "now" a form it emerges of agitating and almost impossible to avoid from even the most "moral" of some students.

This point about the male female ratio is really valid. And MIDA certainly answer that is turning out students to fit into the problems of a new world in Australia. More jobs are available for men so they accept more were claimed. All but 10 we perhaps get a glint of where MIDA is now? Then ONE, as long as MIDA can claim that there is a world wide body of theatre arts theatre training which is not concerned with training for "establishment theatre", and admit that they will therefore be under attack from the body organs that never

Then Bob's concern with her treatment by staff is her own experience. We are all influenced by the beautiful, the honest and the decent as whenever fields we walk in a larger or less degree. If as Mr Whaley claims, all his staff at MIDA are not I shall make basic and certain under this new found MIDA (he knows). He does not say whether these "fores" were those who eventually did get into MIDA.)

Such final point about room and posture "in groups" is interesting. To the best of my knowledge, most of MIDA are what middle class Australians, coming in one group from 11-21. An interesting and valid point upon which to meditate.

Somewhere I would have found the whole note more plausible if George Whaley had been able to say — "In every of that was your experience I'm trying for it not to happen. I know that it can."

With a system that demands that over 700 people be educated by a handful of raters I would say it could happen too easily.

But what really worries me is the spectacle of seemingly all the staff and students at MIDA drawing up their hands in horror at Bob's dangerous orbit. I would have hoped that MIDA might have welcomed the faint gleamer of a variety of dissent or argument in, of all things TA. I would have hoped in fact MIDA might be and used the opportunity to search these pages with all sorts of dissension — rather than this defensive rush to preserve no usage.

And I am sorry that TA felt it had to print an apology after Peter Kennedy's slapping of his literary feet. (Do you need the money?)

Yours sincerely,
Brigitte Klemmert
H.D.W.

— No — we just over-tangled the coat rear —

Dear Sir,

The standard of theatre in a country is greatly influenced by the standard of its citizens. The citizen must needs be taught to be work in expertise based on his reading and expression which is more specialised than that of his fellow theater patrons. Good criticism protects the theater from well-meaning for discriminating.

As our national theater improved, and the only one, Theatre Australia has a vital part to play in measuring and improving the standard of theater in this country.

Then it was with some surprise and disappointment that I read Raymond Stanley's review of the Maltese-York Company's production of *The Room*. (Stageview 18, June, 1978). I am not unimpressed here with criticizing the production but rather the review which I found to be positive in style unconnected and contradictory in its comments and obscure in tone.

To take the first point, expression such as "every sentence appears meaningful" and "again and again one blames the revolve stage which spoils up the production and hedges it to run so smoothly" are irrelevant and naive, and suggest probably quite erroneously, that Mr Stanley is an unappreciated master of the theatre, daunted by the magical world of pretzel.

His comments are ridiculous. To attribute the success of the production to the "marcely direction" of the English director, Frank Hauser, on one hand and then to "Alain William Zappa For the right sort of which 'there is a tendency to averaging for laughs' demonstrates a severe misunderstanding of both the style of the play and the director's role in establishing it. In other words, the director must have wanted to emphasize the broad comedy in the play as he demonstrated in the production as a whole.

More seriously, Mr Stanley has chosen Jennifer Blaauw although "criticise" is perhaps too strong a word for his lenient suggestion for looking at "over-play".

There seems to be a reluctance among Australian theatre critics to be too critical as of course might do the industry here a great disservice. Even with our famous daily newspaper critics there is a tendency to censor any critical comment with a complimentary one. To accuse Jennifer Blaauw again, Mr Stanley after gently rebuking her for "overacting too much" and "under-playing" concludes by stating that she is the only actress in the country who could play it so well. I only hope she does not use her Mrs Gullion as the "pied-piper" for her rising. And what an insult to the many other fine actresses in this country.

Finally, despite of the review's nostalgic and affectionate and often no commentator comment to the success of the student of the theatre in his laudatory review, Mr Stanley goes as far as recommending that the ABC record this production for posterity. What? A complete Australian production of an English Restoration comedy recorded for posterity?

We call this production a "landmark" in Australian theatre like saying that *Death of a Salesman* is the great Australian play. Perhaps if Mr Stanley is looking for "landmarks" in Australian theatre he should consider the Australian Performing Groups production of *Breath of the Indigenous* and *It's a Mad World My Mother or Mother's* production of *Comedy of Errors* to name but a few.

Dearest Australasian, may I appeal to you to maintain your high standard of theatrical journalism by presenting only discriminating and perceptive reviews.

Yours faithfully,
Mr Lesley Harwood
Australasian, Vice.

Dear Sir,

It is not, and never has been, my practice to reply to criticism, however adverse, when it is reasonably based.

David Cogger's review of your recent issue on the subject of the Australian Opera's programmes for primary school students does not, however, in my opinion fall into this category. I have no quarrel with Mr Cogger's observations on either the works themselves or the production of them. It is clear programme 10 addresses his opinion and I would defend his right to do so whenever his conscience may be.

I take exception on the other hand to a number of blind accusations of fact which he makes, for which, to the best of my certain knowledge he can have no grounds. I believe, too, that attacking my work is unwise but and reasonable for the critic to take under what circumstances or the observed it.

Let me state the facts as I understand them:

1. Mr Cogger's review was uncritical, as it is the practice not to encourage formal review of programmes designed for children.

2. Mr Cogger awarded a positive performance of the Opera On Stage programme presented for members of the Australian Opera administration staff and their children in which the bulk of the audience were adults.

3. Mr Cogger has not, to my knowledge, attended any performances given at classrooms in schools which is the condition for which they were designed and in which the participatory elements in both works can best be seen to operate. If Mr Cogger wishes to set us what score they may be regarded as educational perhaps he would care to read the feedback forms which are completed by teachers after each performance.

4. Mr Cogger has assumed, for some bizarre reason that *Professor Abbott's Kitchen Automation* and *Set the Boppy When Human* on Stage are intended as an introduction to formal opera performances. Certainly he cannot have gleaned that information from any printed or verbal information originating from the Australian Opera as it has never been a claim which we have made and indeed a claim we part of the company's policy in respect of that programme. The aim of our policy at the primary school level is simply to provide for children in the classroom an experience of live performance in which the score of singing is predominant. Questions of an introduction to opera or direct comparison with adult operatic experiences Mr Cogger may disagree with this policy, but as far from inform himself about it — as he, even though my other journals in this country has more than an adequate opportunity of doing.

Mr Cogger then proceeds to draw a comparison with a programme which he saw in Queensland. I know the programme and I respect both its intentions and its artistic merits but the fact is an art form quite different. It is intended, quite reasonably as an introduction to formal opera. Our intent is to present Mr Cogger's line of reasoning would be to argue that it would be better to do a potted version of Verdi's *La Traviata* or *The Sound of Music* if what you had in mind to do was *The Sound of Music*.

He may be right in arguing that one is better than the other, but I consider it far reduced in the level of what a gay 8-12 year old Shakespeare rather than Romeo the focus for children is given instead.

Yours faithfully
Justine Macdonald
Teaching & Education Projects
Manager

REPLY TO ABOVE LETTER

The whole point of my comments about Ted and Robbin' which I admittedly did not stress explicitly enough in my article in the June issue,

were that a heavily subsidised opera company ought to develop its educational strategies in promoting opera rather than trying — in Mr Macdonald's words — "simply to provide for children in the classroom an experience of live performance in which the score of singing is predominant."

Some observations were of the work itself and the fact it was being promoted by the AO and I did not comment either on the standard of the performance or the audience reaction, the fact I awarded a positive performance is hardly relevant to that literature.

I do not object to Set, *Kitchen*, *The Sound of Music* rock groups or community sing-alongs as such, merely feel that extrapolating them is not the AO's province. In view of the offhand nature of the program involved and the fact that it is promoted by the Australian Opera those who attend — and their parents — can be justified for thinking it is intended as an introduction to opera and not something else.

David Cogger
Australasian, NSW

Dear Sir

Whilst I was delighted with Ray Stanley's usually astute response to the production of *Richard III* for the MTC, allow me I wish to correct a false impression given by your reviewer.

I did not direct *The Rover's Dugout*. I was responsible however, by usually suggesting the play to John Bennett and for doing some of the early work with the designer Ken Pritchard.

Yours sincerely
MICHAEL RODGERS
MTC, Melbourne

Dear Sir

We were recently given by an unknown donor, a large picture frame containing forty photographs of Miss Jeffries and Julian Knight in the costume of the many productions they appeared in. Presumably the pictures of value in some way but not enough but not why these people were.

The whole picture appears to be about 1910 vintage and the photographs were assembled by a physiographer of Sydney and Melbourne", so presumably the two people were Australian. Their costumes indicate they could have been on stage.

We have looked through a number of historical and musical *Who's Who* in the National Library in Canberra but can find no reference to them. Can you suggest where we might be able to obtain a short biography?

Yours faithfully
M.P. Ryans
Vice President,
Concord Repertory Society

Ray Stanley's

WHISPERS RUMOURS & FACTS



One of the highlights for me of the recent theatre scene has been Steven Beresford's *Karen* supervisely, because I hadn't expected to enjoy it. My only fear is that it will have an influence on others here to copy it, and if you can't be done Australians have to do their own thing in their own way. Another highlight has been that very clever, likeable and original comedian Chas Licciardi. Maybe his show could have done with some cutting, but one hopes to fit in according circumstances.

Seems to be a very strong possibility Mynah Loy will be touring in a play here early next year.

And the blockbuster attractions to be presented by Michael Flatley next year will possibly include concert given by Julie Andrews, if negotiations concerning place are successful. A reader of *Theatre Australia* (Bill Abbott), has commented my views on this, that we have no fine dancers who have graduated from the stage. Quite rightly he mentions the case of Tim Sharpen, whose *Eliza Doolittle* tour has been able to catch up on, but hope eventually to see Tim

Nigella The Prowler. Thanks Bill, very fair.

Setting aside a production in Australia, actor musical comedy writer Frank Howson (who's writing a musical about gangster George Tipton) has a record single out with two of his own songs on "Killing Christmas" and "Jesus Saves". The LP of the Howson/Ferrier musical *The Day After Doomsday* deserves to be more widely known. Unfortunately there's a possibility Robert Helpmann will be touring Whistling Dixie more a better. Apparently not so long ago he had the 1938 Oliver de la Motte Oscar picture run through specially for him, and indicated he was thinking along those lines ... Wonder how many people have noticed the uncanny resemblance Queen Creep from *Derren Price*.

An interesting hearing of one particular dramatic unit who endeavoured management by submitting plays to her writers. Naturally they don't want to upset their 'boss'. It would be easier all round if said writer would submit such plays at the first place under a pseudonym, but maybe he has not yet reached that in his work. Perhaps many playwrights ought to be set down for people to remember in their capacities of playwrights and critics.

Most surprisingly John Tuckey's one and only season for the Victoria State Opera Company's production of *Messiah* left everyone gasping with admiration. Question is Why hasn't he been brought back long ago for the Australian Opera, Australian Ballet or one of the now established drama companies? Is he going to be allowed to stage in Hollywood all over again? And talking of the Victorian State Opera, congrats to them for giving away free such important and informative programmes, when the prices of those stand for other

theatrical occasions are going up by leaps and bounds.

My old friend Robert Atkinson sends me a copy of Auckland's Mercury Theatre 10th anniversary season programme. He is executive director of the theatre and one in full of admiration for what the Mercury has achieved in its years. 110 plays which include offerings such as *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *Julius Caesar* and *Aladdin* as well as musicals like *Centenary Tales* and *Man of La Mancha*. Future attractions include *Dr Strangelove*, *Alan Bennett's A Midsummer Cuppa* and Robert Bolt's *State of Revolution*. Maybe one day a Mercury company will tour Australia. I pass on a few of the New Zealanders who have migrated here will have settled in the Mercury. Like Robert Van Mastratenberg for instance.

I suppose Moira Carnegie, who died recently will be known best for her portrayal of Oliver Turner in *Hillfield*, yes for many years she did sterling work on the stage, both for the St. Martin's and NTCC. Not many people appear to be aware that Brighton-born Moira came from a theatrical family. Her grandfather, Regis Carnegie, was a West End actor and her father, who also bore the same name, was an actor and playwright. An uncle, Charles Carnegie, was an actor manager. Moira had varied repertory experience in England up to the early '30s. This included working with the Beauchamp Repertory Players at Bury before she became godmother to actress Miles Richardson's daughter Moira, called after her. With her Australian husband, Alan Matheson, she ran the Macleodfield Repertory from 1934 until departing for Australia in December 1944. Apart from directing plays and being a top radio actress, she was also a very active member of Actors Equity.

MUSICALS FOR AMATEUR SOCIETIES AND SCHOOLS

J.C. Williamson Theatre Limited holds the amateur rights for many popular musicals, including great shows of the past (written by Leslie French, Hartington, Jerome Kern, Victor Herbert and Lorenz Hart). Every one of these shows has been a success on the professional stage. Why not have your school or Amateur Musical Society do their own production of one of them? You can choose from many wonderful shows including the following —

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Steven Berkoff

EAST AND AUSTRALIA

You. We have enjoyed Australia, and I think Australia has been enjoying us at least as much as we have. From when we first touched down in Adelaide in '85' heat and those carrots into the mouth, every one we have been welcomed and many hands have clasped ours and taken ours and shoulders — our stomachs have been liked at barbecues and our parchingly English puppy skins have been caressed and caressed by the soft young Somers and our caught blood our passions encouraged and our cars endorsed with masking make of paint. Truly we must not complain and it would be charitable to do so when we find the Ogy's warm hearted and kindly — observable and concerned and the audiences have been good they respond more from the gut than English audiences and whoop and yip a lot.

Since the "scandal" blew up in the South Australian parliament about our "lewd play" much attention was drawn to its premiere in Adelaide. But the night was ours as well as our nerves and we all celebrated with that great Ogy espresso Eric Dene who had the foresight to bring us over here — or rather right. He has visited many other countries and in the end may have lost a little money on our Sydney season but, it seems that on the great Australian bush law others have taken the kind of risks he has. After the first night in Adelaide we had dinner in a shit-house restaurant with the Pressman, Don Davies, who was fascinating to talk to particularly referring in aboriginal art with Eric Dene did wild impersonations of Frank Thring whom I had not heard of before, but the impersonation reminded me of an old film actor so I assumed that he acted it. Well the company were reduced to painful looks and concern for Mr. Davies lest he show up but he seemed to like it and so did we all and adored him however, if not his impersonation. Our Business Manager at the time laughed loudest since he was engaged in checker picking and promoting new shows to sell at the.

After this, the show took a furture in Adelaide which is promptly lost in Sydney at a crowd entitled the New Arts, where such test that cracked upward sent an echo round the building reverberating as of a crackling bonfire. The reviews were astounding — really bumbling and upon the Press welcomed us like a breath of fresh air in a room full of old farts. Sweet adjectives and superlatives were hurled at

us like confetti at a frolic and we thought we were laughing — we were, the audience wasn't. There is laugh Rancocca came first but Ogy was not a session, it is fast and frenetic a play bound together with strong sense of verse, comic prose, music, dynamic acting and dancing. It is a gash — an organic gash maybe but not pretty enough for the "Let my people speak" brigade. One or two of the Press were a bit hung up about "Don't bring your Aunt Edie" which kept some serious punters away who thought it might be softcamp which people here have so much. Strange how much theatre is in search of a guy. The successful shows again at the New Arts were the gay ones, *Rocky Horror*, *Flowers*, Big Licker, *Response*, *Frankie* etc. Female impersonators abounding — while mostly

steaming heterosexual plays, or the description of this, was hard not to find an audience.

Usually, although not always, one of the manifestations of decadence in the theatre is where men drag up — where no women is left but for the elected wif of attracting the ladies of women. Some notable exceptions obviously exist — when energy and power has gone we rifle around the doorway for a suspender belt. When in New York, Berlin or Paris there seemed at what predicting theatre, its demise was usually marked by transvestite shows. But as Ogy had the theatre success not yet to have had a great day and still had avoided its rotteness and aged straight away for decay. It managed to leap over the obstacle of creating a great ensemble but corrupted



Steven Berkoff

Photo: Robert McElroy

covered the west of the west English rep. The system of play by play casting with its limited play-offs and diminishing returns. Actors who work together for weeks then split up — no development or unity of the physical and psychic energies of the actors. Australia with its great sun and health-giving sea could produce a strong physical theatre as great as the Polish mimes — but must start from the power and the health of the performer. At NIDA when I did some workshops I witnessed enormous potential and lots of energy but who will continue to train & for anything worth while after they leave? There is some talent here no doubt in the directing of plays, but there needs to be an Australian or European vision and not the Warhol Rep. One can't teach much about serious playing every night but what I did not showed me that there is some potential there but lamentable lack of vision or creativity.

The most interesting experience was seeing *Chorus Line* and being amazed at people here who could sing and dance and act! A perfect ensemble that has been together for a year and nearly all Australian. Watching the New South Wales Dance Company rehearse was also a great experience and I can see how dance enriched by its own energy of the dancers and not some ideology from England was able to define itself and spark influenced more by the dance revolution in America. They are a powerful and graceful company. Our actors used to go in and

watch the dancers and copy the girls. Beautiful both men and women. Gianna Murphy's *Poppies* is one of the great examples of total theatre. We were also fortunate to do some classes with Don Akar I taught the MTC *Richard III* with Bruce Miles which sounded very interesting but saw Kathryn Hunter as the best *Richard III* I have ever seen — not that I have ever seen hundreds.

By the time East picked itself up at the last week in Sydney and toured Canberra and Melbourne where it did great business. The first night in Melbourne at the beautiful Princess Theatre was memorable over 1000 people walked out but those were mostly paying to fill the enormous 1800 seat theatre. Among those walking out was Frank Thring which disappointed me when I was told this, and I wondered whether he really was as grotesque as Eric's impressionism. The next day facilities in one of the other press papers was "Walkout Walk Out!" The two weeks of *The Sullivans* were open, well-willed and interesting to some press people but otherwise a very white at the end of the evening we had the biggest ovation in our festival tour and rare reviews the next day. After that we never failed to elicit huge roars of laughter from the audience when we mentioned the *Sullivans* in one impressed scene. It was as if they, the audience, were trying with us to lift off all the small minded hypocrisies with their laughter!

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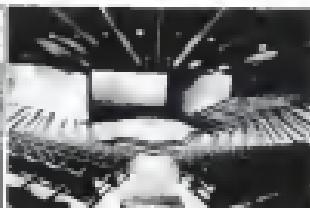
play and sometimes the audience is too arrogant or frightened to accept it, but when they do and that over most nights they get off on us and laugh all they pound down the aisle.

I'm always wanting to do more and say more and go further and further both in writing and performing because I feel that the further you go the nearer you are. That's not meant to be a smart comment but a statement of mind. To realize your dreams, hopes and fantasies seem to be the goal of theatre — a body of belief where you can be profound or innocent where the currency that you deal in no matter what the subject, should always be energy. Some audiences everywhere are starved for it, while the Australians get later than this are suffered and stricken. The stage must send out energy to unlock energy — the flowing backwards and forwards goes right off at stupid goals. There is too much static in theatre both here and in England and people don't like going into a thinking room — they start thinking and that you are left with the idiot box, Frank Thring and *The Sullivans*.

We have tried being kept at more casual and less affected than the grand hotel called London. Then the theatre is being passed away at the most, it's not just collapsing.

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Finding "the Japanese element"

What makes Japanese theatricality so forceful and uncompromising? What is it that links the work of the major playwrights and directors — people presenting plays in enormously varying styles — that can be called "the Japanese element"? (I mean this Japanese element within the context of the country, not looking from the outside which makes everything look "Japanese".)

Kazuo Hasegawa dramatist-playwright exploring the issues of Japanese physicality (as Gionjiro and Births explore the European).

Kura Jirō playwright-theorist and theatrical theorist that has made it through the years without wavering down a language.

Shintōkyōrō Miyazaki playwright who has formulated his own poetic stage language.

Tensurō Mizushima playwright who is still the most prolific and popular dramatist in Japan.

It will mention the Tokyo Kai Shōten, Toku Koishi and a variety of independent productions. But the heart of Japanese theatre lies largely within these four personages.

Saburo Tanabe announced in early '76 that he was moving his Wakataku Teatre to the outback. His theater, originally called the Free Stage had first produced *Bitter Sweet* (about After that, in the early seventies, Saburo turned



Saburo Tanabe in Angle of the Free Stage an elderly play looking concerned

Japanese element²²

and presented Shioda Kyoko at last show *About the Drunken*. He took that show and later its sequel to Europe.

Now it is seven years later and Nagisa has moved out of town, in fact, way out of town eight hours on express-ticks, this three hours by bus, one by train. In August he presented on a discovered foundation of classic genetic Indian construction, his *Night of the Forest*. Like *About the Drunken* it is a collage. The main theme of the production is provided by Watanabe Junnosuke as interpreted by Saitoh. In addition, there is a portion of *Wise* by Shiozaki hidden within.

Rehearsing has never been Saitoh's concern. The text is only a jumping off point for the high precision of the presentation. The theme is madness and possession, female lust and female power. Throughout the performance traces of sex in the form of stage, prop, word, and courageous gesturing provide both relief and contrast to the extreme seriousness of the theme. Lines can be delivered in a manner totally unacted, or breathlessly recited, or in the extreme meaning of the words. The effect is one of high heat up. Occasionally however, this emphasizes the protagonist, as when Nagisa Chizuru Saitoh's latest "Tori," performs her night ardence, brushing her teeth, drawing white lines, and unscrewing ligament to the strains of the Japanese folk, *My Adorable Flute*.

Shioda Kyoko is, in a word, an actress of grace. There is always the chance that she will break out and become her person. And at last since she has the most extensive variety of tone, actually this is what Saitoh's theme is about the use of words, the delivery of words, as a physical action. The voice is an instrument of physical attack, and in the distinction between things used and things done is obfuscation. One should not go in for a costume to come with this, in the way that Nagisa has.

The atmosphere, in the basement, with 600 people from Tokyo packed in like sardines pressed, is to say the least, dense. Saitoh also does her pretty Greek play on the big city, using the same action as a core. But he doesn't reduce those who sit down into *Night of the Forest*.

Karo Dino and his Red Tent now do they shows, a year, the May show which aims for a popular following, and the October show which targets on the theatrical art. The Red Tent is still going strong. For every poor new Karo is radical theatre, calm quiet, maintaining his stage poetry and his energy from the Shingoku days of the late 1950s.

His October show, *A School for Actors*, is an assault on everybody's idea of the dramatic. No conventional left out. Everything from kabuki to pop is presented. Action movements open

the doorway by pushing, and ready self consciousness begins your familiar stage behavior. There is a certain exercise on stage, a physiognomist never lets up.

The story of the play revolves around the amorous clutch of Sakata who is trying to be a policeman at a Wild Cherry Police Academy. The main character is a policewoman, played by Li Ryoko (who is one of Japan's best actresses), and is married to Kuroki. Relationships of authority of rank and exploitation, are all part of this search on the language and systems of power. Li is based on the "school" in more other than William Shakespeare who wears a pink parasol and speaks the hand in female Korean dialect.

I saw five or six plays by Benoyoshi Mizuno this summer. Here is a playwright with his own logic — by the end of the night you need wings like his.

In *A Picture and A Memory* a man walks on and sits on a bench. There is a bus stop just by the bench. A woman with a purse enters. (The objects that appear in Benoyoshi's plays — creams, umbrella, dolls, etc. are usually all the same.) She addresses the man saying that he must be waiting for the bus. He says that he is and how old she looks? She replies that that is the bench on which people who are waiting for the bus sit. Therefore he states the "a man waiting for the bus". In Benoyoshi's world the objects define the people.

In his biggest production of last year, *Twenty Days Which September* once again we see the objects. The purse or car, the pole, the mobility associated wordplay itself. In this play, a young man who has just gone to be married for the month's moon an older couple have been here with him. The man's wife joins them. The entire play is taken up with sugar-sweetness as communication until at the end there is a kind of violent theatre.

Benoyoshi's *A Musical Theatre* like Mondrian, he is reducing himself by image and compelling the viewer to accept his constructions, his images there in the world of the presentation. There is great poetry in his work, the poetry of the images. He is the creator in figures of the theatre of poetry. One may get tired at times of the same symbols and same speech patterns recurring for years in his work, just as one may get tired of having the same dreams over and over. It adds to the terror.

Isamu Hanada's major play of last year was the broad portrait of drunken Tokyo life, *The Man Who Once Thought All That You Could Have To Be Strong Is To Be Alive*. This was produced by Grosser and the brilliant music master, Okawa Shōtarō, last November. The style of the piece is basically marchish. It is full of



The Tokyo Kid Bazaar rehearsed

handicrafts, bad jokes, and imperial character references. Virtually every character who made that part of Tokyo, either Akutagawa Genzo, makes an appearance. So does the Empress, who, at the end, knows all four of the matrons, while a bigger and bliger Kubo, a weird, hairy clown, a towel of protection is cast in front of her.

Isamu will have four plays on this year, one of them a piece about Issa that he calls a "haiku musical". Tongue you an idiot in his theater. I'd say he's like a combination of Shirota and Billy (and Thornton) Wilder.

Of course this is hardly all. There is the Tokyo Kid Bazaar who put on two superb shows last year in their free tap theater in Shinjuku. There is Tetsu Kohara, who has his eye a white, but only two months ago produced his own version of *Sweeney* as Shinsaya (Tetsu was Sweeney "double" and would have his own *Sweeney* after the others had had it). That there were the over there odd performances I saw of western drama, *A Doll's House*, Open on the commercial stage, alone year after year and it could have been My Fair Lady. It avoided making any point like the plague.

I saw *No Sex Please (We're Japanese)* at Tetsu Kohara, spoken with macerated bodies, kinky British aristocrats, and total obliviousness towards sex. It was done in good Koha style, with a loose lower jaw rather than a stiff upper lip, with acting corn and a lot of clowns. I think it was a country of Japan, a country where unfortunately, the penchant for leather has always gone beyond the physician front.

A very awful *Asagai* not even as good as Cabaret. And A. Frosty play, *An Inspector Calls* adapted to Japanese conditions did look like it was adapted for rules as well. I find an all male *As You Like It* in which one comedy boy holds up a recorder.

Finally then, what is a this, putting such the terrible bad productions together? This is a difficult question to answer. Ourselves have always looked at Japan and *Concordian* on page 44.

SHAKESPEARE PRODUCTION IN AUSTRALIA



New strides are being taken with Shakespeare production in this country: some reducing the plays to bare bones and minimalist sets — the States group (Melbourne) — some innovative in bold use of setting — Bell's carousel for *Comedy of Errors*, Rodger's wheel of fortune for *Richard III* — some with mighty reach attempting to encompass two thirds of the Henriad in one adaptation, and now the boldness of having Shakespeare's greatest play "translated" into the Australian idiom by our most successful playwright, David Williamson.

Shakespeare is at war for all we know, his plays speak to all sections and classes, though individually they can be spiced like chips or not surprised for Christmas for instance. The words stand like great Benjamins, innocuous considered for one purpose, a bad pun added here, a snark discounted there, innocuous poorly delivered often insulted but standing magnificently on the ultimate landscape. If the role of Master in *Max Reinhardt's Hamlet*, "he kept though which every instant great going", the plays are the codes which every director must honour in his castle.

The following statements are from directors of recent productions who were asked to set out the ideas and emotions behind their work. It is through them you can be directed in what must seem to work from the outside in, something like a setting and costume aimed to impress upon the play. The need to act in every house appears well-satisfied the last to go. Perhaps creative talents of theatricality, and Melodrama's view that visual perception of great probabilities have brought the about. Barely though, what has emerged is not a general consensus but a diversity of approach. This is as it should be if not we are not going to be carried deeply into the paths that lead to the future.

Finding the Image

John Bell talks to Nick Enright

John Bell is hooked on Shakespeare. That is no surprise to anyone who knows the record, performances of at least half-a-dozen leading parts and a brace of supporting parts in England and Australia over the last fifteen years, and more recently as producer of Shakespeare in as many years at National.

There seems to be a strong — and generally valid — yearning among to every *Henry V* Shakespeare. When you approach the text for the first time, does the image jump out at you, or do you move at for a contrasting image?

I think the first way something occurs to me when I think about the plays, which I do quite frequently. I think about the whole canon: which plays should be done now, or next year or in this theatre, or in other theatres, and something might occur to me.

For instance, with *Comedy of Errors* I found an odd book on many go-rounds, background music. I thought "I'd love to see that. Would it fit in that kind of seedy, bawdy background world?"

Much Ado was an enormous popular success back when you did it here. What do you off towards that?

It was very much coming to live in Sarry Hills, and walking around among the trams, shopping. I really got a big buzz out of that, you know, the streetcar and showing off and whistling and dancing that was going on. I really hadn't experienced that in England and coming back here I found it very exciting.

That and then going down to the Garibaldi bar in Crown Street. There was a very primitive folk scene on the west, of Garibaldi running into some little town I thought how beautiful it was and what a wonderful, friendly Italian-Australian expression of closeness and small-town pride.

Then the two designers stepped in and did their own thing, it made it blithely more exciting. I had imagined something more sobering perhaps a literal Garibaldi atmosphere, but I was pleased that we took it a bit further into the camp, because it meant that we weren't acting naturalistic Italian-Australians, we could say "We're just presenting, we're just playing."

And was it *Measure for Measure*?

It was very much Sarry Hills, very much. People said they were Italian servants. They aren't, they are Italian Australian servants. And the action, I hoped, was very Australian, it was not Italian at all.

And the *Twelfth Night*? How did you set about this?

Twelfth Night was perhaps less sets factory in retrospect. It was in particular I very much wanted to do the play I was

very caught up in the language of it, and the ideas, the ambiguities of the play. But I couldn't for a long time think of an image till I started to associate it with Death or Venus. And I think what started me thinking of that was the discovery that Elvira was a Venetian colony, supposedly, in Shakespeare's time. And the idea of want, and a crumbling city, youth and age, sexual ambiguity, these things suddenly started. So I talked about it with Ken Carpenter. I wish now we hadn't been quite so hasty about it.

Do you never think in the sense of having *Venus* as a day?

Maybe that, although if I was doing it again, I'd try it again, I think I thought there was a lot going by that idea. It confused a lot of people, especially the people that hadn't seen the play before, but I think people who did know the play got an instant buzz out of it, because they got an extra level.

I think it's a girl playing the part it has a performance quality you know, "Come on Paul", that Dick Whittington sort of thing. I've always felt that when there's a girl playing it it really escapes the sexual couch.

Why did you choose in here only Venus, rather than all three women played by a boy?

Because, what he was doing with Venus was making fun of with the corruption he said "bigger the corruption, I'll play greater with it" so another double flag with it, have a boy playing a girl playing a boy... None of you make the other women boys, then you lose that.

It's a surprisingly dark view of the play. It's a dark play anyway, I suppose, but it means that the resolution in the fifth act is going to have a sting in the tail. There are going to be a marriage in the way that you receive in the Comedy of Errors, pregnancy rates, marriage as the cosmic conclusion.

Right. But I think all the resolutions in *Twelfth Night* are very dark, you see—Malvolio's reduction, Aguecheek and Feste being split, Feste being virtually kicked out of the household, and two unattractive, pernicious marriages, each partner getting the wrong twin.

Do you relate that to the way you see Measure for Measure as the 1992 production?

I do, yes. I think *Twelfth Night* is a much darker play than people like to admit, and I think *Measure for Measure* is still a very bad play or else a very dark and ugly play. And I don't think it's bad. I disagree totally with the Catholic, romantic view of the Duke as a sort of Christ figure. To me, everything points to the fact that he's an absolute barker of the first class. In fact Garry McDonald played it.

You reading it up slightly, very seriously, I mean it was a very serious parody. The man was a swaying raddag and an anti-Semite, and totally perniciously critical at the same time. He thought he was doing the right thing by his lights, so at least you're a comic figure; he was a Bigot/Macbeth sort of figure in a way...

I was pleased with *Measure for Measure*. It wasn't well received on the

whole, but I was pleased with what we did. I don't think it's totally worked, but if I had the chance to do that production again, I'd go even more farcical with it — not just cartoonish and broad, but investigating the text and the characteristics more.

There's one thing I get cross about with critics and journalists generally, they don't look further than the costumes. They think, "Aha! They've got people in modern dress, what a gag, what a nose-up!" They don't take it seriously as a comment or interpretation, or assigning of the play with modern sensibilities.

So the *Edwardian* look of the *Twelfth Night* is very much concerned with the idea of an effervescent decadent world?

Absolutely. I think the image is good. I wish we'd got a bit further away from Venice, hasn't been quite so literal about it. I wish we'd used it not as a quote but as a starting point. But that's the trouble. I suppose, with doing Shakespeare as this creature, you get one crack at it, then it's on for five years, then it's scrapped. We don't have that repertoire system where if a production has something going for it you can put it away for a year, bring it back, change a few things, and reassess it.

Through you're paired with *Much Ado* that you can have a second crack at a production.

You, I think, should do it more often. I think all companies, National and the others, should start to build a repertoire of plays.

I think Shakespeare is the most pure theatre we've got. You still get ideas, and love, and a story and a philosophy, and a cynicism and the optimism. You don't need to dress it up. You can have compassless things built for you, very quickly, in an empty stage virtually, and of course you get a feeling of history, if it's not just Elizabethan. I'm talking about *Measure*, actually *Romeo and Juliet* *The Taming* seems to go easily. It's an extraordinarily free ranging mind, and he makes associations with all over's comment and studies and as well as that he's totally nothing over. He's not being doctrinal about the places and times and figures he's writing about, he's looking for the universal, and



Maggie Jones, John McFarlane and Malcolm Keen in *Measure for Measure*. Photo: Robert McFarlane.

John Bell



the audience and women that one always has oneself, and that one sees in society and politics around me.

I would like to move into the romances, and eventually into the tragedies.

Is that a definitive ending of *procession*?

You, sir? I don't know why, I just feel it should be an appurtenant to the audience perhaps *Comedy of Errors* or *Much Ado* as so much more sustainable.

Of course. And I think I do have a plan for *Macbeth* come stuff. I find that great fun to do and I've found it's very useful in that the actors enjoy too. I like to play the histories and tragedies as an actor, but I don't feel yet ready to tackle them as a director.

Would you be prepared to take a play for yourself and work with a company you trust — I suppose it would take a longer rehearsal period — and would assured a common understanding of the play numberless changes with a conception as strong and specific as your past work?

You would if I had enough time, but you'd need six months to do that well...

This image thing, I'm unsure how valid it is. I have had a strong image for each production and I think it's worked, but I don't know how much longer one should go on doing that.

There is a kind of groundswell which came up with the recent *Old* *The Tempest*, where the critical response, I think, was "Well, it's good to see Shakespeare not monkeyed around with". Do you think you can approach the play in a serious fashion?

Certainly not, that's an absolute waste of time. But you can perhaps play down the designer's and director's distorting of the play. If that's what I want to avoid from here on in the design and directorial concept being less strong.

I'd be interested in trying to move away from an image that's so strong that people come out whistling the song, because basically Shakespeare is as much for the actor as for anybody else, if not more so. And that is another reason why he keeps on being done I suppose, because every actor wants to do it. It's still your Master Poet, it's what you've got to do to prove yourself as an actor, to play a good Shakespeare part well. And it's such a shield for actors to have those people to play and these words to say. And I do feel that one does at times lose them by too strong a visual concept. So that's my resolution for the New Year, to losses it up a little bit!

"This was actually part of a much longer interview which has unfortunately had to be severely cut to fit in with the survey.



Colin
George



Seeking a visual frame

Every age has thought fit to re-interpret Shakespeare according to its own preoccupation. His theatrical successors trimmed his instructive plots to suit the theatrical properties of the time Dryden's *All for Love* & *Anthony and Cleopatra* were the tools of all. The eighteenth century saw his plays as training grounds for the predominant talents of actors such as Garrick and Keen. The Victorians smothered the plays in paint, names and upstage perspective. At the turn of the century William Post cut through all this to point the way most modern directors have followed — uncharted staging which allows the playwright's energies Elizabethan stagecraft to have its head.

Afraid with all the foreknowledge the Director of today who plans a Shakespearian production往往 has a number of almost insoluble problems to surmount. He must first find a visual frame for the production. It was once fashionable to seek refuge in the role of a painter such as Vermeer, or to set the piece in Elizabethan Mexico. This invariably got the denouement chattering excitedly about "reference". The sparse bare neutral setting which

followed side-stepped the problem another way — "What the eye doesn't see, the heart can't contrive". However, Shakespeare wrote scenes with arrows and pins with chemistry to put into in the area. Shakespeare is nothing if not descriptive.

Then there is the virus which (for the most part) the plays are written. We suspect the author like his most famous Danish predecessor proclaimed it spoken "tragically as the tongue". But must we assume an English public school education presented us as "British" or an American "nationality" or indeed (as in a recently coined phrase), "mid-Australian"? If "mid-Australian" then what is to be the sound of the grandfather, or the parents or the soldiers of the guard not to mention the mother? content the denizens of Earthkeep in Elizabethan London?

We have not yet touched on the Director's "interpretation" which can founder all too easily by superimposing modern thinking on plays shot through with Elizabethan attitudes such as the divine right of Kings or the concept of charity as in *Measure for Measure*, which nowadays rates as incredulous pyrrhus.

In recent months the SATC has presented two Shakespearian productions. *Markett* was aimed in a clear Elizabethan setting by Hugh Colman, which, to my mind, served the action and looks of the play superbly, and one critic commented as a "success". The audiences were a mix of Elizabethans and Samurais which provided a strikingly varied silhouette and I think over-coordinated the bookings out.

Henry IV and most recent production, had a paralleled wood surround and a bed into which extraneous from the King Hal Doll, Teacher, Bishop, Kate and a number of others and less like characters involving the merciful Falstaff himself, clattered themselves singly or in small numbers. This was considered good, clean fun, as were the costumes which were another mix — the time of Victorian and Elizabethan. A local drama lecturer, however who had spent a whole term expounding the theory that there should be correctly dressed was in despair. He had started to inform his students that the prompt was not, of course, one followed by Shakespeare's own company when they performed the play originally.

I have seen Shakespearian productions in galleries and palaces in Government Arts Councils and Capitalist Open Houses. It is a tribute to the genius of the man that whenever the director and actors make contact with the audience by drawing their energy from the imagination quality of the writing rather than attempting to cover up for its antiquity these occasions have been among my most memorable in the theatre.



Michael Shiner (Prince Hall) and Ronald Falk (Henry IV) in SATC's Henry IV, Part 2
Photo: David Wilson



Informing the text

There is a fallacy current in some circles of Melbourne that any Shakespeare must be presented in a "straight" and orthodox manner, that a Melbourne audience is more conservative than its Sydney counterpart and less willing to accept innovation where the classes are concerned. *Richard III* seemed to dispel that fallacy, at least if we are to believe the critics and the direct response of the public.

Richard III had one or two bad detractors amongst the critics but the majority hailed, in particular, the innovative nature of the production: "a new and oddly contemporary reading", "the gamble comes off with judicious brilliance", "revealed new facets of the Company's work", "constantly presents that element of surprise" etc. To quote more would be irrelevant. Similarly, I have never received so many enthusiastic letters and phone calls from theatre goers on any other production. It would seem that the production was not just dismissed from the mind five minutes after the final Mackeson commented.

But innovation can be dangerous. The persuasive aspect of Shakespearian production, to the director, is the temptation to do something different. How to make fresh and original the old familiar classic? That approach is, I believe, a mistake and a trap littering for its own sake only ever appears as that.

Shakespearian production in Australia often seems to be either overly cautious or excessively experimental. The former satisfies the pastist and the strict academic because it in no way challenges pre-conceived notions of the text (thus becoming an example of what Brook called "deadly theater") while the latter abrogates and clouds the true spirit of the text. The spirit of the text is popularly acceptable and not to be confused with an interpretation of the text. Both of the above approaches deflect attention away from the basic ability of the actor to communicate and also hide the absence of a premise, observable only to the production staff, often called the "through line". To draw up a production in purity consists on the one hand, in a plethora of spectacular effects on the other without there being an organic centre to the production so as to indulge in a hollow exercise. That brings us to the reason behind much of our Shakespearian production. If the director is mainly asked to derive a great Shakespeare for a theatre, then he might well find himself in the

sition of caring about for a different approach different to its own take.

Speaking personally, I would never direct a Shakespeare unless I had a specific response and commitment to that play I had wanted to direct *Richard III* for some time because I had developed a certain attitude towards it at a point of view which seemed to me inherent in the text. Just in reading the play, without any thought of individual production, I had come to see Richard as the crippled slave, the despotic court jester, the little Hitler-like whom nobody took seriously until it was too late. Coupled with that also, my own post-graduate drama work at RADA had given me a very strong impression of the efficacy of the *Whited Sepulchre* as a Renaissance image for the play of *Richard* (and the source of tragedy). The work I had done with my own company in the East Midlands of England had also given me a good working knowledge of



Ted Craig

Shakespearean theatre which was equipped with all sorts of new fangled gadgetry and machinery — traps, flying machinery etc. — and he quite obviously wrote it with the stage effects in mind.

The humanity of the characters in the play was to be the dominant theme and naturally the one that most affected the actors I took; that a step further by humanising Ared and Cobban as much as possible. Ared as Prospero's closest companion for twelve years and a friend, Cobban as a kind of half-boy — twenty-four years old and Miranda's step-brother. Prospero above all was going to be a human being in a truly human dimension — should be continue to remain isolated or go back to face his past? — and if he does so what will he do about his daughter, his servants and his enemies? Twelve years after that had gone very wrong in Milan, things were going wrong for Prospero on his island. Miranda was coming of age, Ared wanted the freedom which Prospero had promised him and Cobban having been educated by Prospero was using his knowledge to rebel against him. I slightly encouraged the sharp wits to create an effecting and still longing ending to the last part of the play and had the play typed out like a contemporary playscript.

From the first reading of the play the script had the advantage of emphasising the approach that we would be making to the play — clear, no nonsense and faithful to the meaning and intention of the lines.

Fidelity to the lines

The production of *The Taming* by William Shakespeare was to herald the bright new policy of the Old Tote for 1978. Three theatres with three separate policies and each controlled by its own director. It was, a year ago, a happy time I had been approached to direct the classics at the Drama Theatre. Checking the records, I found that Shakespeare hadn't been produced at the Old Tote for three years (Bill Gaskill's production of *As You Like It*). This confirmed my decision to start with a Shakespeare — and it seemed right that we should launch our new policy with the world's greatest playwright, and more particularly with his best play written at the quintessence of his genius.

The Tote "bombed" twice in December as *The Taming* was in the final stages of rehearsal and about to move onto the stage. By the time the play had opened, the "new policy" was in tatters. The Supreme Council plays had vanished along with Ian Stewart and Ben Crompton and the Company was waiting on a day to day, hand-to-mouth basis.

The *Taming* proved to be a bright spot in the gloom. It set attendance and box office records at the Drama Theatre and played its standing room only for the whole season. I appreciated the play quite directly. As it was leading off the "classic" season it should not be treated up (idea of Prospero running an Italian grocer/grocer's shop on an unmanaged park of King Cross were later added), but delivered "straight". This would be suggested here and foreseen by the costume which would be Elizabethan and Jacobean. Prospero, clinging on to the Elizabethan ruff and dressing his daughter and his island servants similarly and the displaced party, sumptuously dressed and up-to-date twelve years after Prospero's exile, in their Jacobean collar (We nevertheless decided to dress all the men in tunics and tunics to bring a reasonably modern element into it rather than the somewhat quaint hose-and-hose of the period).

I wanted to emphasise the range of the play and agreed with the art designer, Brian McEwan, that we should not really have a formal set but an environment that would allow the greatest amount of effects and surprises. It would also be a bare platform that would present the actors with a strong focus and be a neutral background for the richness of the costumes. Shakespeare wrote *The Taming* as the first play to go into the new



Bruce Myles (Richard) and Jennifer West (Elizabeth) in MTC's *Richard III*. Photo: David Parker

medieval English folk-lore, around which my actors and I had improvised a number of group-created productions. Original research material on the text of the *Menzies* play, the eternal conflict of St George and the Dragon — you know — you Devil, the Lord of Misrule, the Maypole and the Morris Dancers had stuck in my head. All these disparate research seemed slowly to come together in respect to the text of *Richard III*. Suddenly, I had a concrete reason for wanting to direct the play and I was fortunate enough, eventually to find a company willing to stage it.

The Melbourne Theatre Company now, at present, the only company in Australia with a continuous, year-round presentation of the classics. In addition, the MTC has a superb technical and production back-up. It can accomodate even the most bizarre experimental exercises. *Richard III* was not that, but at least it was possible to present a strongly unearched production within the balanced season that had been planned. In the event, the critics and the public responded well to the unearthing. The production was an artistic success for the Company.

I have been asked to suggest a general role for Shakespearean producers. Obviously, there isn't one. All I would say is that everyone involved in the production must agree on a common attitude which will inform the text. That is how an organic unity is achieved in the production. It makes a statement, it communicates through the skill of the performers not through that of the so-called "translator".



Michael Craig (Prospero) and Celia De Marghi (Miranda) in the Old Tote Theatre Company's production of *The Taming* by William Shakespeare. Photo: Robert McFarlane

Evoking relevant themes

A decision to mount a production of any classic play is determined by the context — the rediscovery that it has something relevant to say, specific and timely. Shakespeare is rich of course in possibilities, not only in the number of plays to choose from, but also in the number of interpretations any one play gives rise to. Henry IV, Part I has not been seen in Sydney since the late '40s and we couldn't find out where, if ever, Part II had been produced. In looking at them again I had first encouraged Part I as the set text for the Learning Certificate in 1984; I found them rich in themes that spoke to us here and now: Rebellion, Justice, Honour, Courage, Responsibility, Self-Discipline, Waste — the last seems oddish. But such themes are relevant to all times. What made the plays seem so particularly near to us had to do with the uncertainty of the time they depict, where everything is in question, most of all the concept of honourable action, a kind of rig for the grubbing of gain. In the light of the "liberated" and easy 1990s the "rigs" seem very like the rigs in old.

But to discover relevant themes is one thing, to evince them in a production is quite another. Most of all it was going to be difficult to give a parallel between the "Onged" line of Henry, the deposition and murder of Richard III, which is the source of all his troubles, and the entrenched Whiteman which precipitated Australia as near as ever it has been into a state of revolution, albeit short lived. I felt the parallel was at least suspect.

Perhaps the most crucial question is being solved in doing any Shakespeare is that of period. It is easily forgotten that in his own time Shakespeare produced his plays in modern dress, that is Elizabethan costume, irrespective of the setting being Italian, Roman, or English itself two hundred years earlier, as with Henry IV. So at the outset a decision must be made between a setting which is the time and place of the play, or some other time — hence the frequent practice of modern dress productions. The Histories are more difficult. They are filled with English place names which particularise the locality, unlike Henry at the Forest of Arden. Secondly they involve battle scenes with constant textual references to swords, daggers and armour and the like. The fights are often the climactic scenes of the plays and have huge potential for theatrical excitement — contemporising them near the risk of reengaging on the potential, while posing great difficulties in visual abstraction. Thus it was with Richard III which happened to open on November 11, 1975, and induced much critical comment regarding the lack of a modern dress production. Some other sort of solution is preferable to me. With Richard III I settled for abstraction, the play being no much less "real" than other Histories. But the Henry's are immensely real, by which I mean naturalistic. For all their epic sweep,



Peter
Oyston

Updating the play

King Lear is an extraordinary play because it explores human stupidity, savagery, and values through a drama of suffering.

Because the foolish old King, the "nay" Edgar, and the baffled Gloucester, rather stupid and thereby given an audience and caught into the chaos of what it is to be human — they achieve an inner dignity which is close to heroic.

Recently in the media Shakespeares attacked the West because we have become soft through self-indulgent materialism — we are "enraged" — our values corrupt. Much as an Australian after this kind of criticism, there may be some truth in it.

Yet madness or mental ill health is a feature of our age. Psychiatry suffering is common in the suburbs of our cities where food, houses, car, pool, TV, and other-gadgets slaves, provide high standards of living. However, our madmen are not like the madmen in Lear. Ours is practical, narcissistic, neurotic, decadent, self-centred and does not necessarily bring about anguish, dignity or visionary understandings, like the madness depicted by RD Laing. The special madness of the devotee God in Rupnik's *Intoxication* is worlds away from suburban dementia.

In Lear people suffer, endure and seek a deeper insight into the nature of man. Edgar knows the "bawdy" of hunger and cuts the skin on top of the horse troughs like an enlightened Buddha, he becomes Lear's guru philosopher. Gloucester has his eyes torn out and gains insight, appealing that all surplus wealth should be given to the poor. "Every man should have enough."

To me Change is the most significant element and mystery in the play. Every character undergoes a real change. I have done my best to reveal this phenomenal theme. This is the unceasing constant of our "now". Change by much as we try to withstand its inevitable flight is contained within our ground for more. We are

caught in our age between paternalism and economic expansion. The two are diametrically opposed. Thus we know change deeply troubles our Australian way of life.

And the play King Lear, written in the English Renaissance of 1605, now translated by David Williamson, is as relevant and as disturbing as the Fox Report to the bedevil beggars of our society, the Aborigines. It is relevant to us because the message goes further, unless we change through compassion for suffering our values — our morality, will drag us in the grave. We may expect factory in the access to wealth. Tell today how great they are and how you earn — and you may nod up with a car, or a house, or their land ... The play is the ultimate answer to the trivial phrase in our language "No".

To me it is a question of awareness. Are we aware of ourselves? If not, Lear's advice is, get yourself glass eyes, then you can quite happily say you saw things you didn't.



Hep Evans as Lear. Peter Oyston's production of David Williamson's "King Lear" after Shakespeare.

the portrayal of a nation in turmoil, the range of words and choices and biopics depicted, is always the human voice that characterises, more of all, the relationship between Hal and his two "fathers" Falstaff and Henry. So basic reality was essential.

One specific factor overruled all decisions for Shakespearean productions at Newcastle, and that is of course money. In the first place it would be impossible to realise the full panoply of Elizabethan historical truth, a good reason for steering away from the play's legitimate period. So another solution has to be found. The Henry's have a very strong Medieval feeling. Thus in the sequence of taverns, the houses of the battlefield and much talk of death and disease, all of which is so evocative of the Middle Ages, is brought straight to mind, who was passing almost contemporaneously with Shakespeare and similarly depicting an earlier period in a mixture of realism and symbolic allegory. Looking at his paintings confirmed the connection. One can try to extract from the Beauforts as much as possible that felt modern as well as belonging to its time.

Economics also determine cast size. We have never exceeded thirteen at Newcastle (probably a little smaller than the Globe company), and no doubling is essential. This is particularly difficult with the vast casts that fill the Histories. Characters have to be cut and merged, but most of all some comprehend need to be found. In Henry, this emerged from the basic contrast point in the play between the Court and Tavern worlds — mostly, each actor plays a

character from each world.

Of course the other major factor which determines the feel of the production is the approach to the text. How to observe the disciplines of the verse and retain the meat of the language without "trapping" the words and leaving the margins and naturalisms more easily realised in contemporary colloquial texts. As well, there is the problem of accent. In John Bell's and my production of *Measure for Measure* five years ago, which had an essentially abstract setting in time and place, it seemed not to matter that a degree of Australian accent flavour the delivery. And of course this is possible while still observing the basic verse and imagery disciplines. John Bell took this step even further with *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Comedy of Errors*. But again, because of the overwhelming presence of place names, as well as characters' careers which locate the Histories exclusively in England, they need to spoken accordingly.

But how did the English speak in 1600 or 1400? The question is irrelevant of course, but that of regional variations is not. In the *Henry VI*, Gloucester is Welsh, Douglas is Scots, Hotspur from 'the North', Lovewell Shallow and Mowbray are from Gloucestershire and so on, and Mistress Quickly, Flavius, Bardolph and Co. are written in a rough dialect very suited to a cockpit troupe. England is symbolically torn apart in one sense of Henry and in the play everyone is fighting for it is essential to capture this feeling of the country as a whole, and hence the respective accents are necessary. Again in

Richard Wherrett



the more abstract *Richard III*, we tried to forge an original accent, comprised of various English regional dialects — something very rough, aggressive, brutal, as is the text of *Richard* as a whole. There is, however, a world of difference between the two texts, indeed one feels, Shakespeare has mastered a great deal in *Henry IV*, despite what is often so brilliant in *Richard III*. The most obvious difference in the present case of prose must be in *Henry IV*, roughly half the play, and again, generally given to the tavern world, as the verse is to the Court. These actors creating from verse to prose are immediately faced with a radically different way of speaking.

Yours of prior however, Shakespeare is either way always a very difficult text to make clear, and a basic acting problem is how to achieve clarity without becoming static and dull. Our basic concern at Newcastle is that Shakespeare, as with any contemporary dramatist, be lively, alive, exciting, and dynamic. The balance between the dynamic and speech disciplines required is a very fine one.



Powered by Henry IV



Alan Edwards



Overcoming prejudices

SOME background first. Warren Mitchell replied to an interview from Jim MacCollum in 1977 that the role of Shylock — or the play did not interest him at all; that much but King Lear did. We took it from there and scheduled the play for 1978.

I met Warren a couple of times in Sydney and talked garrulously about the play while he was in Australia in 1977. Afterwards we corresponded by e-mail.

He had seen the famous Bagg Goodbody production for the RSC and been tremendously impressed by its theatrical vitality and clear story-line. This version had been heavily cut and ran only about two hours.

I knew from our previous experience in presenting Shakespeare that there were certain prejudices to be overcome amongst our audience — particularly the schools. Shakespeare was losing because he was incomprehensible; he had no relevance to today, the plays were 'too long'.

So I was very sympathetic to Warren's ideas about a cut version of the play which would retain the basic story-line but lose many of the side issues and proliferations. He sent me Bagg Goodbody's script and suggested we use it. I must have added a large tick in the enormous debt it owes her as I incorporated many of her cuts in our final

production. Roughly one-third of the text had gone. Of course in such a truncated version many of the speeches that belonged to original characters were now given to other people. This created some problems in rehearsal where some of the cast felt their characters had been changed, but we finally agreed that our production was 'a version of King Lear' and that reference to the original 'text' would only hinder us, we played what we had.

The story-line was clear and precise. The play flowed logically into two parts from the magnetic road of the opening scene through to the horrific blinding of Gloucester as Part One and from Edgar's exclamation "Yet better thus and known to be confirmed" to the final tragic end.

Then we looked at the language in detail. Whatever a word or phrase was obscure, we tried to find a modern equivalent. Thus Lear's "She conditioned up her memory, straight took horse" became "She summoned up her household, straight took horse". Sometimes, particularly with the Fool and Poor Tom it was difficult and on occasion we left the original. Sometimes unquestionable errors. One delight was a change from the Fool's "If a fool's brains were in his heels we'd not be in danger of lobes" to "If a fool's brains were in his heels why he not in danger of lobes?" and the pun got a laugh at every performance.

In discussion with Peter Cook, the designer, we agreed about the production concept: we were after an environment rather than a set, we needed clothes not costumes and we didn't want either set or costumes to put the play down to a specific, identifiable period. The result was a heavily textured flooring on three levels with a monolithic 'Oon' at the back, and stacked mounds of straw, felt and fur that looked as if they had been mashed by hand.

The play had sound/music specially composed by Jim Carter much of it emanating from a synthesizer. I wanted to avoid that (to me) dull off stage trumpet call used that too often harks. So much of the sound was slightly distorted.

"What is my action?" became the key question during the early rehearsal period. In solving it Warren was an inspiration not only another in his own right was concerned but in helping others to clarify their objectives. We laboured long and hard over some issues, particularly the most difficult 'bad' scenes. Fortunately I had Robert Kingdom as Assistant Director and he was able to take other actors off and reiterate them elsewhere. Nevertheless the

scarey joke was being bandied about "We're doing Act Two as a programme note". It was then, grinding work.

Eventually the role of the work began to be mastered and we attacked other problems: handling the language, virus speaking, selective emphasis (not as a mad William Poel's "Twenty lines a minute" and the without gabbling or fumbling. We poised it until it stood. There were no pauses between scenes, no character ended in one scene the next was entered and the text was picked up. We tried to make the play flow and not let the audience 'off the book'.

There came the run-throughs with costumes and props and the dress Rehearsal period. Even at the late stage we were changing — cutting odd bits, putting back others, changing blocking. But under Warren's leadership there was excitement in the air and a feeling we were 'on to something'.

David Baird did some beautiful lighting. Jim MacCollum harangued the company about speech generally and audibility particularly. John Humphreys wasn't too happy about the fight scenes, the swords kept bending, certain extraneous didn't fit or were "full to wear" the snake gas wouldn't work — it was the usual story.

But it finally came together.

Did we achieve all we set out to do? No. So we're all looking forward to re-enacting the production for the Seymour Centre in Sydney in September. But it was a success with our audience, particularly the 3,000 school children who saw it, a good notices and gave all of us who worked on it a tremendous sense of involvement. I think we all learned a lot.



Warren Mitchell (right) in QTC's Lear
Photo: Publicity Photos

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A throw-away play EVEREST HOTEL

JACK HERRARD

*Review Play by Sean Wilson, Matrix Theatre Production
With David McRae, Tom O'Brien, Tim Quilty, Sue Ann and
Gillian Davies; Directed, Sean Wilson; Design, Michaela
Anderson; Set, Sean Wilson; Movement, David L. Jones
in *Mountaineering**

*Music, Julian Archer; Tech, Peter Hargreaves;
Dress, John Paskins.
[Professional]*

Sean Wilson who was brought out here for last year's Playwrights Conference, in the evidence of *The Everest Hotel*, should never have been allowed to return to England. Any one of several of our playwrights could have conducted a diagnostic operation on the play and stitched it into theatrical shape. The Conference has got it all wrong. Playwrights like John Osborne need not help nor run scared. Indeed a policy of intervention and far-wound-down writers, backs and passes could readily be implemented, though this would be a heavy cost in these heady days of Australian drama.

In general, the standards of traditional conservative theatre in Australia can be guaranteed to remain miserably before a big name. The avant garde another pack of dedicated cultural cringe, will steadily grow below a New Name. Deep down both groups share a distaste of Australia, as much as that, unlike P. White and B. Humphries, they cannot even bear to creatively utilize their ideas. They live in Australia, but their minds reside in London or New York.

I don't know where Sean Wilson's mind was when he wrote *The Everest Hotel* — one of those uncooperative extremes that could be variously labelled a twisted joke, or Dada, or Pop. Evergreenish serendipity, or just plain weird, Wilson has mapped up a few technical chasms, shuffled them, then left them unmetalled, another less unmetalled to starve to death in fact he throws them all away. Like many of the lines in the play, You could say it was a throw-away play.

Given Hoepel's current status, the ungrateful task for the director and cast should have been a tenaciously rebuffing director and interpretation assault on the text. The performance I saw was weakly and underperformed — understandable to a certain extent as the production had been pushed an early date on the premises demise of Ted Melville's *Let Me Be*.

Less understandable was the production's lack of elementary dramatic and scenic structure, its sheer incomprehension ably due in part to the same text but



Helen Hemingway (Tracy), Linda Paskins (Dorothy) and Julian Archer (Sandro)
in Hoepel's *Everest Hotel*

also due to a failure to establish a set of recognisably corporeal. If this left the cast rather rubberlike, it left the audience entirely floundering.

The opacity of *The Everest Hotel* is not the comprehensive incomprehensibility of much of absurdist theatre, where reality is stably and painlessly banished on board, its obscuring costs much more to wilful indulgence and a rare mephitism.

The games and horseplay sports of the three women, with their anti-religious and anti-political import, need to be openly and clearly seen as such, as the playful emanations of three distinct characters, as the satirical and cynical sublimations of those caught in some social quagmire. Indeed we are given little to purchase

upon, the characters merge maddly, interactions are rarely face-to-face, scarcely in contact and only imposed, show no past history, the disdained theory ends up discredited practice. One marvels that Sean Wilson could be linked, at any level, with Stoppard, Beckett and Haig if this is a fair example of his work.

Given these difficulties, Julian Archer, Helen Hargreaves and Linda Paskins throw everything they've got at the audience, like the named sheep and lambified by the level of energy and commitment, as if it were a game of bogey with only one team, no starts, no half and no goals. The best things in the evening are the songs, wretchedly performed by the cast

A very great performance indeed ELECTRA

DANIEL PARLER

*Based on Sophocles' *Electra* by Mark Bright and Paul Hodge; Music, David Campbell; Associate Music Director, P. J. Daniel; Sets & 1977 Design, David Paskins; Stage Manager, Sean Prentiss; made possible by Robert Gibbons; Creative Team: Designer, Sophie Pollock; Musical Director, David Campbell; Chorusmistress, Christopher Riedy; Stage Manager, Sophie Pollock; Associate, John Blundell; Chorus, Ruthie Schubert, Sophie Pollock, Kelly Gibbons, Justin McRae, Jennifer West, Chris White, Paul Morris, Martin Pearce-Jones, Sophie Loring-Maurice, Peter Hanmer, Stuart Bassar; Performers*

Let me unashamedly say that Frank Hanger's production of *Electra* for the MTC is the very best I have ever seen of a Greek tragedy. Not that I have really seen many. Of course I can recall Oliver as his Old Vic *Oedipus Rex*, Judith Speldt Thorndike as Ismene, Wolff in both *Oedipus the King* and *Oedipus at Colonus*, Shirley as Medea, Anticetti as Electra (she only had a performance from Dame Peggy, disappointed and) with Catherine Lucy as Clytemnestra and Leo McKern as Tantalus, and several local Australian productions (including, of course, Gifford's *Oedipus* for the GMTC).

Normally I am not enthusiastic at the prospect of seeing Greek plays. For me

there is usually too much dancing, long drawn speeches in high flown verse translations and generally static production. The *Electra* though held no spellbound, with a text compelling and straightforward production in which not a word seemed to be lost, and made it really seem real of a play than a recitation. How much was due to Nick Enright and Blauert's very skillful adaptation translation or in the latter's actual direction one does not know. Possibly a marriage of the two.

The backstage beating of drums and cymbals at crucial moments heightened the suspense and frequently undid otherwise silent areas of action. On the evening I saw the play, it was impossible not gripped the audience was in the arm seats — one could certainly have heard the proverbial pin drop — which is surely the test of a good production.

A really comfortable warm and rich set from Anna Frazer helped considerably, as did the continual reengaging and unisonous speaking of the Chorus. In fact the Chorus seemed to work together better than I have known at previous Greek productions and certainly were not handicapped by grotesque masks as can sometimes happen.

Two performances jarred. Firstly Sandy Gore's Christensen Electra's sister, which was all right in its repose and sometimes achieved results but all too often presented with a bright and breezy air, whereas I have wondered at from a much more modest play. Then there was Dennis O'Brien's Tiresias which is clapped onto to hinder too much an sense of his friend Gilfert and Salter's performances. Yet O'Brien certainly is an actor of considerable stature, so I can only hazard

a guess as to the reason, and really have no prompting for so doing. My theory is that he started off by giving his well known impersonation of a gawping old man that did not meet with Blauert's approval, the director used to stamp it out and in doing which the actor and stream with the rather unsatisfactory character resultant he ended up with.

As I believe, another, Orestes, Leonie Burrows was right up to her very highest form, building up a towering figure that was gripping, chilling and horrifying. David Bowler too succeeded with Orestes making every place seem meaningful.

Jessie Hagan, after disappointing me somewhat with her Mrs. Bolena in *The House of Commons*, gave a heart rendingly powerful performance as the title role. Whimsical and wistful, without resorting to any tawdry or obvious over acting she still managed to play with all stages one pit of meanness was definitely subdued. It was a very great performance indeed and if Miss Hagan was doing it in London or New York there is no doubt she would be the talk of the town with people queuing up just to see her performance. I cannot before Melbourne will see a better one this year. Orestes' almost the entire time Elektra, who like Hamlet is possessed with the desire to avenge her father's death must be a very taxing role indeed, yet at certain will Miss Hagan gives an indication of any exhaustion. Now — just to complete her acting range — will someone please cast her as Shae's St. Joan?

One is surprised that such a short Electra of one and a half hours is a short play. The MTC did not back it with a short closer comedy. When the Old Vic staged it they also presented Chekhov's *The Wedding*.

It is a production without ideas

KING LEAR

BY ERIC DANIELSON

ONE DAY IN "King Lear" directed by David Williamson, the King (John Gammie) is driven to suicide. His daughter, Regan (Patsy Barnes), comes along. Lear (Peter O'Toole) comes along. Gloucester (John Blundell) comes along. Goneril (Vivien Merchant) comes along. Kent (Peter Polycarpou) comes along. The Fool (Robert Bell) comes along. The Duke (Anthony Head) comes along. The Duchess (Gloria Holden) comes along. The King (John Gammie) comes along. The King (John Gammie) comes along.

A production that combines the uncouth talents of William Shakespeare, David Williamson, and Peter O'Toole should have been a triumph the fact that it is a great deal less than successful is sad, but incomprehensible. It achieves a degree of artlessness.

Adapting Shakespeare, whether to give *Romeo and Juliet* a happy ending or to make some crypto Marxist point or in this case to try and make the language and story understandable, has a long, ancient and disreputable history. We need not go onto that area to say that Shakespeare is a good deal better writer than his erstwhile adapters.

What I would dispute in the case of David Williamson is that the language is almost impossible for a modern Australian audience to understand. Especially the language of *King Lear*, and especially when Williamson has only done a line or two transcription of poetry in 1600 prose. It is rather like a Classic Chinese version of *Paradise Lost*.

It seems to me that the problems of Shakespearean language arise not from the fact that it is Elizabethan English, but from the fact that it is拙笨的 Shakespearean English written shoddily, for a particular play going class. It served up to that class what they wanted: emperors of characters, complicated plots, poetry, allegory, myth.

One has to ask what the essence of the play is — narrative or mythological characters speaking poetry. Telling the story in simple, you could do *King Lear* in three paragraphs, but the felt meaning, the purpose of the play can't come from changing the great language to jargonese.

However it might have been possible to give it another language and another structure to achieve a similar effect. If the concern was for the meaning of the play (as the director says in the programme) then make a play and production about that subject. Don't confuse a battle with the stream of audience with what happens in the drama. A more audience approach might have considered the power and sympathy of Cl Dennis' pupae on the *Assassination Plot* in *Romeo and Juliet* or Charles Marowitz's versions of *Shakespeare*.

It may be that Williamson, who on more than one occasion has indicated that he thinks Shakespeare is unproduitable,



Jennifer West (Cordelia), Jessie Hagan (Elektra), Betty Blauert and Vivien Merchant (Goneril) in the MTC's *Electra*. Photo David Packer



feels that Shakespeare shouldn't be produced, as Trevor Nunn does of the Greeks, but to them do a version that is more bearable than the original is very strange. He has taken out the great speeches and exposed the creaky structure and made a most diminished Lear.

Even the story of the play is as more comprehensible than it is in the original; there are still the echoes of characters, the multiple plots. And Chilton's production doesn't help either. The focus on Lear is spoilt by his smallness, and apparently equally with the subplot of Gloucester-Edgar-Edmund. A more meandering and precise procession of inaudible speeches would be hard to find.



Reg. Evans Clark, Joe Rabe (the first
Price-O'Connor production of David
Williamson's "Long Lost" after Shakespeare)

Oynton has set the thing in a polygraphic framework for a myriad reasons or two, not apparent in the production. In this wide姐姐 we have a shifting cast of action of no great skill. Reg Tsoar offers a Lear of some dignity, but no power, also seems more practical than ready. Neither he nor Oynton have solved the perennial problem of the opening of the play, the hinge on which the narrative development depends. That is the willows of Cordelia in my reading conforming to the usual necessities required by her father, and the momentary arrogance of Lear in not accepting her anyway. It's not helped by Jackie Kain as Cordelia, who was too smug to be convincing. For the rest the lines had the flavor of Joe Biden's Fool shown that he should stick to names, and Robert McGinnis' Edgar has few signs of life.

Gymea has failed to give the play a purpose by being, except some unreflective glosses on the programme. It is a production without ideas.

And David Williamson ought to have a think about who it is that goes to the theatre in this country and why. If it is a fairly middle class educated audience then surely it is in the production that points can be made, not in huffing with pseudo-translators. And if they want to gather school kids into the bosom of the theatre, then let them use more recognisable and less paternising huffing with the language.

**Colin Friels Darcy
is something of a tour
de force**

LES DARCY SHOW CIPPOHNA

卷之三

For Jim Clegg Shows His Anger. Michael Brock, executive
Vice Chairman, The Standard Authors & Publishers Co., showed his
anger yesterday when he said, George Michael
Bartlett, lighting chief ~~stagehands~~, was held
without bail.
Mr. Bartlett, 30, of 1015 Madison Park, was charged with
attempting to commit suicide.

**Private Business Sector Job Growth from State
Policy Change Study Work &
(continued)**

The SATC double bill of Jack Hiltzoff's *The Leo Duroy Show* and Roger Polkett's *Cuckoo* is based on the premise of a "double knockout". In its way, an apt enough description for Hiltzoff's play at least leaves the observer feeling that he has been hit with something real and tangible. Polkett's piece, on the other hand, is more like an amateur backbreaker, with a powdery puff punch misappropriating as a heavyweight champion who only ruffles from a giant jaw. Give him one solid jolt and he'll collapse in a crumpled heap of delated skin and blemished bones.

Hobbes' reader-can-identification treatment of the Ben Derry story is elegant, lucid, and constantly theatrical. One hesitates to profit by suggestions to a master of his ability so the following observations should be read as a kind of afterthought from plot — can we please have the next ten rounds featuring Derry against the forces that finally defeated him? There is surely the material here for a full length play in which the catcher elements are more prominently deployed, in which Derry's opponents in the ring and are now flushed out and set against the central figure. As the work now stands, it resembles a first draft for a more extended play a drama in which Hobbes could make more use of his skilled organization of ideas and techniques from Shakes, Auden, and molecular rheology.

I was left wondering somewhat chagrined that more was not made of the American experience, albeit that the person of Darcy's situation assumed deliberately excluded. But that a woman along the lines of "the tragic rose and lily of the great Australian folk here" is called for fits of the play's strength as it leaves overjoyed sans Darcy up as the archetypal Australian figure. He is an individual and yet

presently because of this and the situations in which Hibbert sets his, he can also be seen at the suspension of coherence and clarity which are representative. In spite of the singer and engaging "take it or leave it," tone of Hibbert's part, the play itself seems curiously lightweight and at times almost constructed in its deployment of character and incident though some of this is undoubtedly due to the direction. What can matter in the play and what Mr. Hibbert individually has the ability to give us, contributing them to their





spectators. Shows thrown up at the reflections on the glass fighting scenes in the wavy and perspective projection to *Claude Bissell's "Feydeau"*: "the spectacle of a gowned human armed lighting fitfully her bare bosom, like a terror falling out of the clouds which ought to command any sensible person at the folly of treating the actual combatants as the 'principals' in a picture fight." The picture fighter is no more than the spectators imagine him to be than that lady with the sword and star on the stage; he is really a fair-weathered."

The performances in Ben Brad's production are considerably more continuous and energetic than those we saw in recent SATC work. In particular, Colin Friels' Derry is something of a tour de force, energetic, professional and displaying a rare degree of physical agility in the boxing sequences (well staged by Michael Flanagan). It was certainly not the fault of either that the ping-pong dance the play did not quite achieve the degree of movement and release of energy that it surely needs. Similar in its way to Macnaghten's dance, it tries to be staged in such a way that the audience experiences a feeling similar to the elation caused by a fast minute goal, or the collective release of breath at a tantalising peak that closes an aerobic act. Here it seemed almost an afterthought, a spate of Friels' skilled and rhythmic combinations of dance and boxing movements.

As Margaret Dancy, Len Dayman was impressive, avoiding for the most part the pathos of the performance drama impersonation and conserving one of the spin-offs of the casting. Looking at times like a lawyer, more formidable version of the Ambrose Pritchett character in *Playhouse 90*, Dayman managed the motherly enclaves well and neatly steered the character past the stock fresh mother clichés. Isobel Kirk was less successful as the failure though not quite physically right for the role, she could have done, one felt, with a little guidance when it came to adopting the male persona. The other characters, with the exception of Judy Dunn as *Widow*, Len's girlfriend, seemed rather pallid and underwritten.

Run Shun's direction lacked focus and tended to ruin the performances on the third stage, allowing them random and haphazard entrances and exits. Far better to have staged the piece as a matinée with a gallery of figures playing foxtrot to the audience. In this way the excellent songs, which tend, alas, to get lost, could have been more effectively presented.

The second point of the evening resulted in a double victory as Roger Phillips over both critics (one point) and the reviewer, who scores at the total average in the fourth round (appropriately entitled "Wedding").
Watkinson scored in another's (weakly) point of free association is not my idea of disaster and after a hasty patch of images and words from General theatre (Sanderson, Butler, Long, and the "American Connection", I could only conclude that the author most generously sheer for were, expressed by one of his characters, that "sense is the very last thing I care". My sympathies to the poet, author and television as always.

THE GOOD PERSON OF SECHWAH

100 YEARS OF THE BIBLE

The main disadvantage with La Hora's system of professional artistic direction and amateur casts (further complicated by the voluntary involvement of the professionals) THE team seems to be the unsuccess-
fulness of the end product. Just as Rock Edinburgh's amateur Young Ali was marred by several lamentably weak performances, so this concert offering a well below the standards we have come to expect of La Hora, and is only spasmodically relieved by an effective score or a good performance.

It's particularly unfortunate that it should be *The Good Person of Szechuan* (by my reckoning one of the great plays of the century) which has suffered in this way. A masterpiece like that, which we're likely to see once in a decade if lucky, needs the talents of the most experienced and centrally aware production forces available, not the sort of young workshop standard cast, uncertain direction, and trap-trap fad sets and costuming. There's a moment of pleasure in the whole first act, and only cynical dons log on there after interval. At the end I wasn't sorry I'd stayed, if only for the extraordinary levels of irony which the script achieves in its resolution. Pata Chonchita as the good person Shui Ta forced to adopt the harsh alias Wu Shui Ta was good enough to mark her as an actress of promise, and Mike Vaughan's Shui Fa the butcher was an intelligently low-key and moving performance. Most of the rest of the cast appeared never to have set foot on a stage.

The Good Person of Szechenyi was performed by Bechtel during the darkest days of World War II, and as a parable of what a good person has to do in order to survive in a world of greed and exploitation. It is a convincingly cool look at western capitalist society through the lens of an oriental sage, as Bechtel himself said it uses "the parable form, which describes without creating and without possibility of evasion the shabby and imperfect society in which a man can only live and flourish."

when he is regularly bad". To be staged effectively and interestingly requires a director who has at least some idea of what Brecht's stage theories mean in practice, a vigorous exploration of the possibilities of the particular form, and an acting group with enough worldly knowledge to understand that the scenes of the script are the scenes of life and not merely clever constructions.

That production had none of these and La Boite, though a busy place and an "alternative" theatre in one sense, at full part of the fare and with opening night curtain, I don't think anyone turned up to the post-performance layer party with even the slightest residue of enthusiasm.

Little stimulation for an audience

POINT OF DEPARTURE

2010-2011 学年第一学期期中考试高二年级物理试卷

I suppose every theatre aficionado of my generation must have once been in love with Jean Anouilh. Measures of his qualities of wit, pathos, peregrine, world-system and uncompromising sincerity attest still being there, at least to emotional recall.

In my case the only professional prediction I ever checked off the sheet everybody was good at was The Works of Emily Dickinson at the First Flaphouse in the '50s. I think I must have read everything that Amherst had written by that point. Much later in the '60s I was still captivated by the revolutionary events of 1968 (led by young people not too far removed from Amherst's Antigone) I saw the opening of *Die Ober Aargau*, another version of his *Arcadia* as *Transpa-Perle* at the drawing rooms of ancient chateaux, which had become his chosen style. This place seemed very far from Amherst and *Pais de Sorez*.

So it seemed an impracticable but intriguing idea that the Queensland Theatre Company should choose to revere the latter in their current season at the SGU.

(horn, pedalling, posturism, passing passers revising women on the platform) and on those long reiterated nights when it was their right to hold. They lived not historically (for their Puristic reasons of homogeneity) their innocent horny ideals of Art, Free Love, Free Thought and so on, making, in the words of Goran the dancing, Prospero (Arthur Dignam) paraded high like Puck's crew among light bulbs and crook tree scaffolding hopelessly smirking at his cracked piano, a modern contribution to the culture of their city in his case little postcards and intimate rather goodly, but all to show off? The nervous sound of Mr Big's publishers' handbells. A long rattling seaport at the harbour's bottom an ancient beach country road, the great man's cigar ashtray clamps (Save I Spain), typical agent Banzaiism in perpetuity by Mount Bratt of all places, along with other wartime refugees. "Mount Bratt!" shorts Princess (Gloriaest Turner), the early stripper and good lapsed Catholic as one of the play's more brilliant annotations: "what the hell would we do in Mount fucking Bratt?"

John Shergreen's production, witty and moon-drawn, and by the third performance succeeded at all its first eightquiries (all, that is, except Arthur Dignam's electrifying dress). By now a traditional feature of the Sydney stage is in my view the only satisfactorily good production set items of a Dorothy Hewitt play. Hang precipitously from Brinsford's window Byzantine set & back-thinking soliloquies in gardens, open and lonely habitats to the problems of a tiny stage, the beautifully orchestrated cast, like saints in a stained-glass window, between them create a glowing scenario to a crib and its people.

From as much incidental gossip on the one small stage, all of them here, albeit their chosen Fury barricade, acting these socks and other garments off in the name of the workers' constitution, the breaking of the oligarchs and the ruin of the Tsar, it is difficult to pick. Degtyarev and Glazunov pair effectively at an equal, twisted feet; an ostracized alone, most male performances of their generation (though Glazunov, who based his methylated writing on me, had better bloody wretched), and Steve I Speaner, methedolized Sunday playwright, proves abominable, spiky and micturating as I presented Sunday actor.

About ten or eleven years ago, however I am somewhat unacquainted. Her dark hair naturally curly I fear I have suffered before, and when, as a devotissimum which, she should have chilled the blood and made such individual hair start up like quills on the liveliest porcupine, she
still retained a companion sparrow with a quaint hobby, and yet her warmth and her blooming person abide in the memory, and amidst all records. Both the conjugate the
and Hewitt Hewitt is the now obligatory
such maturing class. At Tuckahoe the
intimate, singular John Parmenter, the
excellent C.R. Biddle, "Biscuit" and others in a

anthology *Era Blithe*, is a good lead voice but conspicuously inert on a role both sympathetic and otherwise; she becomes bored rigid after the first half-hour with a plaintive proper upbraiding her creator for creating him in the first place, and while trying one might stand to anything that moves Geraldine Turner, on the other hand, who gave prolonged pleasure to several consecutive housewives on the opening night with her unusually frank strip, has presented that combination of qualities (dignity, vulgarity and decorum) required that should assure her place as a great lady of the Australian musical stage, if such a glory will ever exist in the cleverly censored numbers.

It should. It must? For too long have we laboured on the web of *Hamlet* (unconscious progeny of Buckley's cabaret show) with casts of three in dingy stages, on the stupid premise that this made more commercial sense than song, soliloquy and supernaturality (as shown, theatrically) an age of dwindling balances and colour televiews. From O'Malley down to Eric Mottram now, and back to Bechtel and Shakespeare and mass ball and beyond, I wonder that what people will come out as a cold night to see a theorist and nothing less... and therefore there is a lot of action on a big stage doing clever things to make what can burn on the way home to the car, like Ralph Tyrell's unconvincingly lonely scene on that particular evening, at least one song of which, the elegiac "Isak of Henley," at the end of Act One, which should stand as Dotter's epitaph, would in a slightly better world have achieved that place on the jukebox now bestrodded by Leonard Cohen.

The framework of the evening however, goes to two ladies: Robin Meeks, as Ethel Malley, Eric's constricted suburban sister forever quivering on the verge of radiant beauty and triumphant need; once again, one of the dual or doublets of Stanislaus' critics and detractors in architecture so truly that we feel we have known her all our lives. But best of all is Miss McGregor as the scrubby little housekeeper Winifred Waterfall ("Break a lot of your money back") whose profusion results from every crack in her ill-used body and cracks in her inarticulate voice. Her Lilliputian tragedy, her shapeliness and her pregnancy are conceived with such exuberance and such poetic exasperating beauty it takes the breath away.

It might be appropriate to say one more thing. It is Mrs. L. H. Hazelet, who in her way tribute to Shakespeare on her birthday of 1935, her verbal facility and her insights into character, does as far back as I know that the unsurpassed old book was written. This is the ability to link things together so they seem (only seem) to begin and end. To this long link in herself she should devote some study, and rather less personal. May I suggest her attention to that other great poet of the Australian theatre, just down the road, Barry Humphries, to see some part of how it is done.

A triumph for all concerned

HENRY IV 1 AND 2

REPORT PAGE

Great productions of great plays overshadow our interpretation of a whole era. At Elizabethan times the capacity of the theatres for oblique comment on contemporary politics, their audience and range, and following from that their popularity, is brought out in the fall at Marlowe. The mark-mater of discontent is disclosed in favour of a series of unsettled weather, the nature of classical comedy and the renewal of the romantic form are reported in favour of a rather new oil comedy as part but not parcel of experience. Trilogy's beauty and individual-centredness, followed in the dramas of Horace and Palatini give way to the ageing nature and the training collection of characters of epic. In short the theatres provide a full range of life.

Richard Wherrett's adaptation of *Moby-Dick* in compressing the two plays into one has allowed him an even bigger canvas, a scope which takes us from a teenage Hal (John Bell) seems to shed a decade of age to a King, and witness that the fight for a new order in England as the medieval enclosures are bulldozed away. A sixteen-episode series from the penality of folk myth (Glenboevar) and the dead hand of rigid values (Eldorado II) to find an open way.



Frank Wilson in Falmouth Pier and a
Heron by Peter Holderness

injury to be seen with a longer son
parish become apparent between stories
which would not otherwise have come
together; reverberations are made and joy is
the source of compassion but in
paying away repeated abductions. The
Boris' heart is seen not only as a place of
sin, unrepentance, greediness, and the
pleasures of wine and food (to which the
audience friendly pointed) but also as
disease as an undiagnosed healing with a
feast where throwing up before our
eyes, Falstaff's mirth with the diseases that
are the toll of excess and repartee referred
to vulgar shapeliness. Falstaff's first battle
with the Lord Chief Justice and the corrupt
proceedings of assembling his village of
"puddle scabs" are both seen before the
Shrewsbury conflict. This becomes the
single strip of action with the battle less
from Part 2.

The heavy chestnut of whether or not
Parts 1 and 3 are in Edgar Johnson's view,
"only one because they are too long to
be one" is irrelevant here the issue is a
rather whether that amalgamation works as a
discrete whole. My view is unreservedly
that it does.

Taken as large the emphasis falls not so
much on Hal's "redemption" in the eyes of
his father, but the deeper issue of his
emergence as a ruler. John Ruth Hal,
seen as a thinking being from the start,

not the meek disciple set against the
boorish mass of Hotspur. His "I know
you all" are the words of an heir apparent
expressing the wisdom of a future
England but reclining unswayed by it.
The rejection that most comes at play when
Falstaff and Hal each play the role of
Henry IV, the former a delinquent rascal, but
no king, the other a ruler who with
grin and looking finally answers "I
do, I will" to Falstaff's pointed "Thou art
a plump Jack". The moment is
electric — one remembers how simply
such lines must be played when Part 1,
when Falstaff escape reprise, is gone
alone.

Here, and it is a mark of the greatness of
Frank Wilson's portrayal, Falstaff is taken
through to his reported death on Matilda
Quigley's final, obvious which falls just
short of sentiment. He begins as that
furious symbol of life released by Henry's
scrutin of the theme. At first he is
an indulged "father" to Hal who affectionately
touches the youth's hair, a good boy
fallen age by focus of rage of back and
memories of rapacity, and an expansion we
that shows him through the numerous scenes.
These are both a strong bond and
yet distance in the relationship with Hal
as affluence made the man free by the
brutality each perpetrates on the other.
Falstaff must always be imagined, he must
be mirthful, for an anarchy that denies
property rights, sexual choices, social
restraint. Yet his unrepentant, parrot
appearance. The Gaunt's robbery is set
against the theft of England by Henry,
values too abstract to withstand his
selfish pragmatism — men in war are
taught for discipline so why not choose the
moment, and justice is to be hoodwinked
in an age of greediness of ultimate values.

Peter Carroll's less boisterous Hotspur
continues here more with Falstaff than

with Hal. Doubting with Absent Pend
seems inspired in adding poignancy to the
barberage of Hotspur's ideals, but prob-
lematically as Hotspur an almost aristocratic
style failed to cohort with the
protection the hefty (unconscious) north.
An accent often appeared faintly abroad.
The blustering temper, the quicksilver
emotions, the caviling and constant
search for the grain of honour were all
there, but Hotspur demanded over art.
Hotspur's position is less porous, he is at
his most vital when around a horse, only
fully alive when on the battlefield.

As Falstaff wakes onto decay and
Hotspur falls to rebellion, the Prince gains
strength. He knows the tedium lie is no
answer. "If all the year were playing
hollyday in sport would be tedious in to work",
and that constant war-mongering is
no way to bring health to the nation,
though he does not shrink from battle.
Hotspur and Shallow both would be
keeps, but it is a ruler who can encompass
and care above both who has the rightful
head for the crown.

Alexander Hay as the eponymous Henry
IV feels the full force of the possible mean-

and the guilt of his route to the throne.
Once a divinely sanctioned kingdom has
been overthrown, once a crown has been
grappled from a rightful ruler whatever lies
wrong, the King must ever be fearful of those
with powerful reach. Hal is certain
"You won't, won't it, keep it give it me".
Wherrett makes the relevance to our age to be
noticed in the corresponding uneasiness
that men need reflect the state after the
ascension of Whitemore. Yet he is rightly not
too literal when the parallels are wider
ranging and more complex than a one to
one basis would allow. Power has not even
the stability of an old order at a moving
point.

The design cannot stand, not from
light grey units but the pastings of
Greenglass. The set by Tom Langford,
though changeable like an army, never
integrated the actors and copied
admirably with leaders that range the
length and breadth of England.

That the learning failure of life as a
War and Peace scale should have been
attempted by Wherrett with a cast of
theatre is to be applauded, that it came
off as a triumph for all concerned.



Stuart Campbell, Bill Charlton, Robert Mezzzo (Swinth Chauncey) and Kate Walker (Mother Courage) in NED's *Mother Courage*. Photo: Robert Walker

The quality of strolling medieval players

MOTHER COURAGE

DOROTHY HENKET

Mother Courage and Her Children by Brecht (1958).
Directed by Stuart Campbell. Cast: Bill Charlton (Dona
Isabella); Stuart Campbell (Dona Maria); Robert Mezzzo
(Swinth Chauncey); Barry Williams (Hans); Joanne Whalley
(Ilsa); Peter Brinkley (Lotte); David Lansbury (Lud);
James Hayman (Ulrich); Michael Alexander (Tilly);
Pete Potts (Moses); Angus Wright (Siegfried); General
Foyen (Mike Thompson); Dennis Young (Sister Barbara);
Robert Campbell.

Mother Courage and Her Children
worked fantastically in Jane Street because
of the beauty and simplicity of Ashbury

Mellett's direction, some good, strong
ensemble playing from the company, and
the extraordinary power of Kerry Walker's
Courage.

The homespun clothing, simple plain,
brown half-curtains, the tableau and groupings of peasants and soldiers, the
colloquial bawdy translation, give the production a rough-hewn, rustic quality,
so that the epic journey through the thirty
years war was always tough, savage,
harrowing, tragic, and starkly believable.

The direction allowed Brecht's great
text to illuminate the tiny Jane Street
theatre with its compact space, so that the audience seldom lost their sense of a
chronicle, a moving play. The actors had
the quality of strolling medieval players
who had set up their boards in the village-

Kerry Walker is, by all the laws of
average, too young to play Mother

Courage, but she is an extraordinary actress with the guts, the presence and the voice to overcome the problems of her part. A piece of inspired casting gave her the lead in the Shavian/Winter title *The Right, the Powder*. It was another inspiration to cast her as Courage. Her strength held the test and the company together on a barely adequate stage.

She had great support from Lewis Pugh with the sparkling face and body as the mate, Kaffir, and Angels Punch, fresh from her triumph as the screeching hags of Jimmy Blackstock's who played a double role as one of Brecht's high cheekbones, heart-rending, haggard shorn, and the terror-stricken brewer's wife clinging to her piece of ground.

The acting however went to the women, but the men provided solid back-up, particularly Alan Badger as Bill, the older son, John Clayton as the Cook, Robert Manners as Swiss Chronic, the younger son, and Robert Alexander as the chaplain. Clapton is always good in a role that needs his particular quality of resilience and honest playing.

There were many scenes to remember — the juggling of Courage and her Cook, the death of her older son, the scolding of Rajah, the shriveling where and her erratic losses, Kaffir perched high on the wall warning the sleeping town with her bawling drum. Her fall was perhaps even horrific. For her the safety of the actress seems to intervene in a stilling suspension of disbelief.

Of course there were problems... Courage and Kaffir dragging the waggon around that very small circumference with no room to manoeuvre, the sometimes wavering voices in the songs, the clamour of some of the "crowd" players, but the marching feet and the marching tango off helped to create the rhythms and the epic proportions of the play. The tableaux around the waggon were particularly useful in advancing the plot. They worked like inspired film clips, and the stage's fancy hat and fancy boots became, in that bare setting, images of naked beauty, however important left over in the search of sex.

The Jane Street production proved once again that a great play doesn't need a huge stage or a gigantic budget — what it needs is perception, resilience, toughness, beauty, and a little ingenuity.



A canny course through stylistic changes

A HAPPY AND HOLY OCCASION

CHARLES O'BRIELIN

A Happy and Holy Occasion by Peter O'Donnell
Directed by Stephen Barry. Phoenix Arts WA. Theatre 36
Box Office 1976. Director Stephen Barry. Design: Ross
Bennett. Lighting: Dennis Ord. Hair: Margaret George
Costumes: Gail McLean. Stage Manager: Bruce O'Malley. Stage
Manager: Gail McLean. Casting Agency: Louise Lorraine.
Cast: Michaela, Joanne Murphy; Bruce O'Malley, Lynette Williams; Lynne Bishop; Rosanna Rizzo; Christopher James King; Bruce McLean; Jason Dwyer;
Chris McLean; Margaret Peate.

Contemporary Australian drama — indeed Anti Lit in general — owes a very real debt to the Roman Catholic Church, especially to its Injunction Wing, good old Catholic Education (Archbishop Beaufort) Wright's reaction to its process of exploding issues and Irresistible Gulf. Pacem in terris deep in the psyche of its characters would have as Tom Kennedy, Peter Keating, Ron Blair or Jack Hibberd. To their regret the Dorothy Howets of that world have to rub along as best they can with mass High Anglican Boarding School, who from their own ignorance at best a pale imitation Doctor Jack and I might come to blows over whether the Maria or Christian Brothers were the more adept at finding the right mix of physical and psychological terror names, but it would be a public doctrinal orthodoxy.

Of course acknowledging the Church's shall in photostamming the spirit in somewhat backhanded grace, rather than thanking the pat, pugnacious and Machiavellian Webster and Shakespeare. For every howlaway into magisterial literature there are countless tears being dolefully at public services awaiting their penance, visiting Liberal home the device of the DLP and carefully steering a malleable number of offspring along the parental path. In the Jack Cull rebellion an Anthony Vi of his followers, a certain Dick, suggests: "The last thing we do, let's kill all the lawyers". I see his point, but I for one would want to put a chip on the magazine of my rifle for a few other felonies as well.

John O'Donnell's *A Happy and Holy Occasion* is another exploration of the Catholic family in Australia, with strong overtones of excommunicate fresh alienation. It has sufficient force and originality of theme for it to be possible to say that it is not unnecessary in the light of Peter Keating's *A喜怒哀乐*. The time may come for us to cry "Amen" to the Mackie, but not yet O Lord, not yet. As with the



Mrs Holquist, there are some things about which we must keep plugging away. True here will always be aspects of such plays unfathomable to the layman, such that I had to explain to a fellow critic what a Child of Mary is. My response began: "Take one impressionable young girl and a blue ball, stir carefully with..."

John O'Donnell's play has been sufficiently discussed in these columns for it to be unnecessary for me to go on about it at length. Suffice it to say I found it a master's egg of a play both structurally and morally — that is if the curtain in question likes me eggs for breakfast. The expository build stuck out all over the first act, and characters tend to come on and tell (rather than show) their characters at length. There are aspects of the play on the border of caricature and parody, and moments of intense feeling and insight. I kept finding myself aware of influences from twentieth century drama from all over the shop, from O'Casey to Korda. I must say however that I did not find the clever of the young would be summarised "stopping the action to come down and give the future history of the other characters, the jiving note some others did". I had one or two questions of fact which doubtless a quick phonedcall to the Archbishop's Palace here (yes he has died) would clear up. I thought, for instance that twelve was marginally underage for a secondary (Quincey?), and does an ageing take a birthright into the sentence with him? Posing questions only.

Both Stephen Barry's direction and the playing served the play well. Mr Barry steered a canny course through the stylistic changes and the actors handled them deftly. Jason Sydney grabbed the part of Henry Jules Mackie with both hands as did Margaret Field smelling her nose Cecilia Edgar Macleish's Tonky Raining — somewhat of a one-note part — had the right air of mordacious, embittered consciousness. Lucy Daly with spiritual bypass, and Leon King made the most of the old cod, House of Hallucin. It was also a fine debut for a very young actor Jimmy Spain as the boy Christy.

I found that the performances of Joanne McLean as Mary and Lester Wright as Father O'Gorman were great. An welcome return of Joanne to Perth. She managed here to bring off the difficult task of making Mary's misinterpretation of the nature of her feelings for the priest completely credible, and the nervous tension slipping towards madness chillingly plausible. Lester Wright is one of the most unpredictable actors around. His skill is unquestionable, but the results of his piping uncertain. In sum (to me, from out front) that if he likes what he is playing and gets into it he can be remarkably powerful, as he is here in making this lecherous, morally inde-

rather priest not only credulous but blithely ill on the other hand he seems not to get much the part — I felt this with his Much in *Streetcar* — it looks as though he is just winging it playing from stock. I'm pleased to see him show us again what he can do with something that challenges him.

They perform and perform non-stop **BIG BAD MOUSE**

BY MARJORIE LUKES

By *Bad Mouse* by Philip Korn and Richard Carpenter from an idea by Tom Stoppard. Stage Director, Michael Weller. Production, Paul Keating. Set and Costume Design, Robert Hopkins. Music, Alan Soper. Associate Director, Michael Edwards. M.C., Peter Murphy. Assistant Director, Michael Edwards. M.C., Bruce McLean. Directed, Ian McEwan. Cast, Yvonne De Carlo, Peter Murphy, Michael Edwards, Paul Keating, Pauline Quigley. Opened 10 May. Playing: Tuesdays to Saturdays.

(PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY LAWRENCE)

Big Bad Mouse is the sort of play no self-respecting critic goes to see, let alone praise, but ends up coming out babbling gleefully about them all making them like that no more. Preferences, that is, not plots. It is, in fact, your archetypal *Mad-Hatter* lark treated with the contempt it deserves, and hyped up by the simple means of using, or abusing, it as a Verdiello (capital V), in which these two very funny men and assumed clowns, Henry Edwards and Eric Sykes, gallop around the world on something modestly dressed as a seventh heaven tour.

The story line has the sort of plot that there should be thickening, and events as its stereotypes. The setting is the office of Charles Fox, a bacon factory. Mouse Mr Blooms (Eric Sykes) is bullied and tormented by his boss Mr. Price-Fitzhercules (Henry Edwards), until one day the nice little man is mistaken for a sex-mad who knows Harewood Common, after which he becomes a celibacy who turns on, not merely the officeelped, but also the frustrated spandex secretary and the over-powfully attractive lady-director (not to mention some of factory girls off stage).

They have found a way of making this stuff hilarious by the simple means of giving priority to the relationship between performer and audience. When a polite round of applause greets Henry Edwards' first appearance, he obligingly makes another entrance to give the audience a chance to have a go at an amateur, and keeps obliging till they get it right. When his telephone fails, mice with delighted but subdued giggles, he turns the repeat performances into a frenetic round of applause by revealing the audience that the cast is "personally on stage" able to see and hear, not like the fellow on the box, who don't appreciate such signs of approval. Encouraging the audience's sympathy for Sykes is simple: Edwards merely tells them to go easy on the applause, too much of it being bad for Sykes. That leaves welcome for the man with the sky smile when he edges onto the

stage. And so it goes on. They trade on the impact of their personalities, well defined and well-rehearsed — bumptious Edwards, with Sykes, more innocent, with a slyer sense of humour. Between the two of them they have a fine selection of visual gags, from the drollish hand-shake telephone pickup to the various funny walks and absurd bits of rime that come straight from the old circus. Verbally they manipulate some sensible jokes and comic routines by setting them up, getting and mangling them so that they turn into something else, and of course there is always Jimmy Edwards doing his routine solo. They perform and perform, non-stop.

You there in a supporting role — notably the mighty Ivan Triesig, who has been in the show since it started in 1987, and who, as Lady Chapeau, struts across the stage like a hawk lectured with his peers. There is also West Australian Elizabeth Hancock, turning herself into agitated birds, as Miss Spender, the ultimate in spinners, who has not even found out what the birds and bees are supposed to do, let alone people. Her manicobiosis after being given the last smile by Mr Blooms is truly startling. Ian Cummins is notably generous as the long-suffering office beauty, and Keith Rutter as the office paces has a lengthened song playing straight man to Henry Edwards, and one keeps for him to be back, which he doesn't. In theory managers try to look for own good looks to contribute the lust of the quartet of female joint-clowns, the dumpy, short-cropped ugly girl who ought to be grateful for being accepted as a person in the dark.

What else comes to think about? Or which one doesn't, the basis of the whole play as many and offensive, and a good target for any self-respecting women's action group. However, the performers manage to define it, by glossing practically anything that interferes with their comedy routines, and so we find oneself joining in the patriotic laughter of an earlier, more Barbara age, that had no qualms about finding nature's aspects hideously funny instead of pitiable cases for treatment.

Echoes of recognition **HANCOCK'S LAST HALF HOUR**

BY MARJORIE LUKES

Presented by Stage One by Michael Williams. The Dress Rehearsal was at the Playhouse Theatre Opened 10 May 1993. Director, Michael Williams. Set, Michael Williams.

How good would she play be if Michaela Williams did not have a moderately framework of tragedy? The real-life figure of the sad clown, who was a regular panel in editions of *House* ...

the ready reference to showbusiness names — one keeps asking how far on, the audience, are supplying the material. The facts given are sparse and oblique. We watch and listen while a man is drinking himself to the point of suicide. But would the whole thing be quite as powerful if we didn't know the man is Hancock? Is the process of self-destructive dementia strong in itself or only if the victim is a household name? How far do we care about the judge now in the steady notes bluntly被打消ing as between conferences with the woolly mouse-head on the wall and the tips of violin shared with a expert pianist?

In fact, of course, we care quite a lot. The man has flashes of wit. He is, on the whole, unaggressive and concerned with the world at large. Above all, he is not a bore — he is a ruminating on his lined life, half beyond the personal distance to ask the larger questions, ranging widely as a compassionate reader of encyclopedias. The basic philosophical questions, even if only sketched in conversation between the pun and the mouse-ball song, constantly hint at possibilities of a freely used before it was drawn over in violin.

The reasons for his despair are only gradually pieced together as the dialogue passes over it — anecdotes, suppressed fits of weeping, before parts of useless information, half-finished gags, witty one-liners. The transition from success to failure is much less precisely charted than the constant preoccupation with Being Funny. It almost seems as if there never was a moment of true success — just audience, restlessly demanding — Mr Hancock, say something funny! And then there were the failures — in marriage and business partnerships. One cannot quite believe that the funny and intelligent man could have had such an uneventful run of bad luck, but that's the way the play has it, which possibly makes it not so much a piece about a man as a piece about the nature of failure.

Much of the enjoyment in the play is contributed by the verbal highjinks as in the line that can stand for the play as a whole, when Hancock should set on the window — "It's all in desperation!"

Goeff Gibbs is in the role as very good indeed. He is of naturally solid build but here manages to be pudgy and flexible, spacing his broad intervals well in the resulting, self-indulgent passages and even in moments of distasteless never-forgetting mawkish or embarrassing. He does the mouse-ball runs with gusto — having strongly into song, throwing away lines with the knowingness of the skilled performer Hancock was. Even though he is not attempting an obvious imitation, the gibberish, the occasional guitar and the overall feel of the character evince actions of recognition.

The Greenroom's stage area has been reduced, with the seating encroaching on the tiny ready room with its amateur bed, grafting on the wall (in womb with a view?) and the game of roughs and crosses on the window — giving the whole thing a possibly claustrophobic note.



Life does not have a monopoly on randomness

**WITOLD GOMBROWICZ
IN BUENOS AIRES**

MARGUERITE WILSON

World Copyright in Seven Acts by Roger Pulvers
Crescent Theatre Company, Clinton Street Bell Centre
General Manager: Roger Pulvers; Artistic Director: Lynne
Terry; Associate Director: Lynne Terry; Set Design: Lynne
Terry and Rodriguez; Costumes: Lynne Terry; Lighting:
Lynne Terry; Sound: Michael Shand; Stage Manager:
Mike McLean; Technical Director: Lynne Terry.

To settle all bets at the outset, Witold Gombrowicz begins with a kiss and ends with a kiss. Those who see Roger Pulvers' play feel broadly into two factions. There is the "I didn't understand it" bunch, who speak with a shiver and a conviction of having been mislead, and there is the "I really enjoyed it but I didn't understand it" bunch, who speak in a conspiratorial whisper: "I might be leading a new faction. It will be called the 'Do you really need to understand a play, no, long as you enjoy it?' bunch." A play doesn't have to be a slice of life; Not everything a playwright writes is necessarily symbolic, so when the Soldier-chimney an expressive speech about sex being dead and the twentieth century's passing unnoticed, with the remark, "She's my lotion in quarters please, not a wedge", the (I) is not necessarily indulging in any sort of symbolism at all. Life does not have a monopoly on randomness.

The cast showed a pleasing appreciation of the fact, and a pleasing aversion for conventions about theatrical convention. As in many plays in the plus point out nothing — especially in theatre — is natural. There are only things that look natural and things that don't. None of the performances looked natural, because some of them were ridiculous. It was probably inevitable that their local ruler would think "ridiculous". They didn't have reactions or development — not much. Could I have been that they didn't mean to? They didn't play serious or comic (Oh, there! But perhaps the director told them not to?). And they didn't have a motivation for every line they said! (On such things be?) But then, perhaps motivation is as part of that sort of theatre?

It was a very spare production space set

— brown horizon blue sky trousers, one with a scrubbed TV serial for *The Man* to run up his white surrealist trousers, an test and bath's seat and rock. Then of course the indispensable bag of twenty-three punnacious snakes, for dragging bodies around in, for without snarling religious art will make. It is a play that depends greatly on lighting. Each scene ends with a picture. Each picture makes a point. The spotlight on the Matador-and-children that fades to the strains of "Adelaide Australia Fair" tends to linger in the mind. The final scene, "I want to take my love and hold it up to the Sun in both my hands", with the red sun rising, is especially moving if you don't see why.

The Canberra session was marred by the fact that the brother from the original Newcastle production left the cast also the Newcastle version. There were some symptoms of a getting-to-know-you struggle with the new cast member. Differences were soon settled, save all parties were on the same note that the struggle between Children's Street Hall and the Canberra classic ended in a cold monologue every year. The sub-zero temperature was...

Of course, the fact that it is not necessary to understand doesn't mean that there isn't anything to understand. It's just that trying to follow a formal theorist's analysis when you are from birth a native in the modern dialect of linear logicality only makes you nervous. The values of Japanese who hate the No theatre stand witness to that. Witold Gombrowicz is a play about history, a history that can be seen in its drama form in Japan. The language of war breeds profligacy. The Real Enemy changes from alienating nihilism to religious guru and finally reveals telosness as the central Truth of his faith. War is preferred, careful pacifism is non-existent, because reason leaves their war time equality with men to disaccordance and childbearing violence again becomes respectable and a call as doubt lead to more war. To all this there is only one possible defense for the creature — withdrawal. When Witold Gombrowicz was living in Argentina, he explains, he had completely unassimilated his early self to the most overwhelming pain of all — that of everyday banalizing among the Argentines. And now with childhood, which keeps you immune from torture, will also keep you immune to the pain of others' war and history will begin all over again. What then can you do? Write a play about it perhaps.

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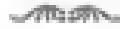
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Marx

Acts II & III

By Ron Blair

ACT 2

A PANTINESHOP IN SOHO
THREE MONTHS LATER

An atmosphere of misery pervades the place. This is the interior and a series of booths for dry cleaners. Long rows of shelves line the walls and run up back into the recesses of the shop. These shelves are loaded with goods—shirts, blouse, clothes, linen and books which are stacked and disorganized.

The articles in the shop are for sale—all clothes being displayed in the rooms above. On the corner of the open space and close to the customer rows the "Spool," a classic piece of干洗机 machinery. The space is simply a long wooden pane down which bunches of pictures are thrown from upstairs by an overhead. A belt with a long machined hinge down it, and which on arrival is required to take its place in the hole which is drawn up in the thick sleeve where the fangs that pincer down the spool.

ACT TWO

MARX enters the Pantinehop. He looks around the shop and notices the family after her side in the display case. Enter DICKIE, the Pantinehopper.

MARX: Lovely other day. You're just in time doctor. The three months are up today. To tell you the absolute truth, I didn't think you were coming.

MARX: In three seconds away?

MARX: Yes, I thought it'd been this morning first thing. Streets swarming of young 'uns for sale and now—Mandy has them running round in circles like mad. She had a lot of work today. Saturday is a great time for embroidery.

MARX: Oh? Why Saturday?

MARX: All the talk and laus come in to redeem their Sunday best. It all comes back on Monday. Through the door and up the stairs.

MARX: A few little bairns from them houses?

MARX: I don't complain doctor. But I think we have seen the last of that kind of the day, though. Journals like *Refugee*? Let me see. Come home, dancing people—all enhanced for strength and bone now. It does them good in the coal I always say.

MARX: I'm sure a dozen more.

MARX: Now doctor, I know most of the pictures I'm your place come by way of your wife, Mrs. Marx, and, but I appreciate that. I owe the honour of that visit to the family itself. Say no more doctor because aren't what they used to be. Only the other day I had a discharge a cloth,

when I passed a couple of general practitioners had found their way out of here into a similar establishment down the road. I can tell you it was very embarrassing when the owners came in here to rebuke them. I felt I had breached a sacred trust. Which goes to the root of our old story. Well, it's been an honour being your chief bone doctor. It's time to go something of the class in here.

MARX: No Uncle. Lying in there.

DR. HEDDLE: Listen?

MARX: I must have to go through all the family stories.

MARX: Farmer? Oh I am sorry to hear that Doctor. Still I can never fail to be glad to hear that it's housed for a good home.

MARX: Oh?

MARX: Yes. I'd only just put a down here this morning when a well-to-do man from Golden Square put his head in. Slapped five-in-a straight cut.

MARX: From my wages you say?

MARX: Farmer? I said so soon. Then here's Doctor Marx never. Still under photos. I need not say. That made him want it all the more.

MARX: Because it was mine?

MARX: No doubt about it doctor. If it belongs to somebody that you can be sure people will want to wear more. Come back Monday. I said that in writing. Doctor Marx comes here in the meantime.

MARX: Well here I am uncle. But not for the what. That's you are holding a book of ours.

MARX: As a matter of fact doctor. He's holding a good many of your books at the moment. Which one are you referring to?

MARX: Running through several pages I didn't tell you all of them. Try that one.

DICKIE places the book on the leg on the operator's stool and the leg is drawn up the spool.

MARX: What would you do exactly if people started reading?

MARX: Oh! By any means. If they started reading, they'd have nothing to prove. But there's no danger of that doctor. People find plenty to prove, even they are very haloed.

MARX: You never know uncle. In might happen one day that people would say about us now.

MARX: Can't say. If people started reading there wouldn't be no name. But that's another story. In the library, because there'd be no going. My pride in reading. My lovebooks for the dead to be remembered. Mr. Doctor people will always try things to invent and discover or they'll find their way down here, the man and the girls and lower girls like hoodlums about the spool! And the books too. Here you are Doctor.

MARX: However, I cannot return this day, uncle. I only went in order to remember.

MARX: You take your time, doctor. Read whatever you want. Your eyes won't wear out the paper, although if you read by this light, there's a差别 when the pages will do to your eyes.

PC lights the lamp and abraces the desk over the door. Marx opens his book.

MARX: Well, I think the best of the day's over. I'm not expecting any more at the same.

DR. HEDDLE: Good. Doctor. Dr. Dickie.

MARX: Close?

DR. HEDDLE: Not yet, you isn't? Well look, what's this? The said clatter of Dada Marxs. Didn't tell me, someone's gone and pawed him? What's he doing here, mind?

MARX: I'm Reading.

DR. HEDDLE: So he is! How very handy an excuse like that doctor, because I been trying to catch you for some time now. Everybody I put my hand on is number eighty-eight. I told you I didn't mean, though anyone can smell your right taken out of it! You owe me doctor. Lamb chops, blackbean, asparagus... it's all there. A mouthful on talk.

MARX: The only one who conducts business in my shop, Dickie at the door, because the customers. Be nice to you way.

DR. HEDDLE: Apologizing is fucking Just a minute. I'm taking out the doctor's stand tomorrow afternoon so I'll be very fast.

MARX: Bring the bill and speak up the ticket. One can.

DR. HEDDLE: Do you know London, uncle?

MARX: Attention wanders from the book to Dickie.

MARX: A charming creature. One of my most delightful clients, Dickie, doctor.

DR. HEDDLE: Yeah, well I'm not envying my brother his place and if I'd only paid his bills I wouldn't have to bush my Sunday suit. I mean a feller can't take a girl out if he's such wearing his best.

MARX: Ah, but you Dickie, Dickie. If he paid his bills, you wouldn't be taking London out at all.

DR. HEDDLE: Yeah! I never thought of it like that.

MARX: Dickie —

DR. HEDDLE: What is it?

MARX: Haven't you read *Finance Review*? An description about us General Mafalda?

DR. HEDDLE: No. Good read it?

MARX: I can recommend it.

DR. HEDDLE: Yeah. Sounds a laugh a line.

MARX: Depends on how you look at it. That man Berney was the physician to the court of the grand magistracy in Geneva during century twelve.

DR. HEDDLE: Fancy that.

MARX: The Mafalda society was a military one and an under the sole control of all land.

DR. HEDDLE: Oh yeah? That's fascinating, isn't it uncle?

MARX: Thank god for democracy.

MARX: Being a military society, all leaders depended for their livelihood upon the army.

DR. HEDDLE: They probably got paid pretty.

MARX: Soldiers, mostly soldiers. You look at all that stuff. You won't have found more weapons and guns in the person from Geneva. On those soldiers, Dickie, you said that in history of military coup and insurrections.

MARX: Listen! Listen to me!

Bardfiske I'm model of School's an
Master Constant disease.

Maria That's important. Whenever she army
wants, the traders followed. Everyone and
everything lived on the move, right down to the
last tomorrow.

Athena What about you?

Marina Bought in last week. Probably stolen.
Bardfiske Just a minute. If everything was as
the more like, how could you find anyone? Tell
me that it wouldn't work here. People are
supposed to stay put here and even then you
can't find them at all?

Marina I give everyone three months to move
and sometimes they never come back. Monks,
though. People are more fond of their goods
than their freedom.

Maria But what if you went along too, under
lock and key with you? What if the whole
city stayed about without being noticed by the
eyes?

Bardfiske From what I can see, people with no
money move about quite enough.

Marina Not true. English. They drag like fleas,
wanting to be equalised.

Maria No private property — the regions there
anyway — no private property is bad enough.
For me, Miguel, home was wherever you stayed
for the night. A sort of shadow country around the cities. Uncle
Giovanni's estate is just like that. Journey past.

Bardfiske Are you telling me we should all pack
up and run around England like a lot of savages?
Is that what you're saying?

Maria I am suggesting to you Bardfiske that the
truth that comes from owning property can be
achieved by owning no property at all.

Bardfiske That's just the sort of argument you
can expect from a peasant. What do you say
to that?

Marina Uncle has no regard with peasants. They
give him none of his business.

Marina True about. Turnover! the heart of
the business. I would prefer to see Bardfiske count
in every single week with his Sunday sum than
have a holiday on The Cross Islands.

Maria All such names out of life is your way.
Bardfiske. What do you want?

Bardfiske Rest.

Maria What do you want from life?

Bardfiske I chance. Same as what I got I
suppose. More or less.

Maria A lot more?

Bardfiske Well, I wouldn't mind owning my
own shop. Not likely though is it? I mean such
people like you wanting cheap as hell and all.

Maria What do you want Bardfiske?

Bardfiske Rest.

Then we're up again. Well I know it sometimes
hurts. And I cross my own knees and spread of
course. And I cross. What business of yours is
it what it hurts?

Maria The truth is Bardfiske that you and I, we
are in the same boat. We're nothing, nothing
in spirit. If I know it, you don't. That's the
difference between us. And when you do
manage to scrounge enough money together to
own something, it will find its way down here
eventually. Am I right, mate?

Marina You, sooner or later everything goes up
the spirit. For men, books, shoes, watches and
books — everything. You Doctor, one out of the
few people I know who actually reads the books
for pleasure. For most people, books just for
passing and nothing else. This shop of ours is a
great兄弟 the great writers look at study a
place as the books. If you were to write a book
Doctor ...

Bardfiske What, how?

Marina — it would look the same as a volume
of Shakespeare. Here. the only good thing about
a book is it's compact.

Bardfiske What's that?

Marina Only glass eyes and generally, I was
told they have no more use for them.

Maria Do you know who created it?

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Bardfiske You define the attitude of the suspended
writer. Thank you for Bardfiske never settings
Bardfiske off.

Maria For the time.

Bardfiske Oh yeah. My son. Almost longer
than you are.

Marina You see Bardfiske who the attitude of the
bougeoisie or there is no room for such
bougeoisie in absence of money. Someone pays
you for your music —

Bardfiske You always doctor.

Maria Someone pays you and you give the
money to someone else — to your landlord in
such like. The bourgeois have made you their
servant. You are simply collecting money for
them.

Maria But Doctor. I have my duties too.

Marina Let us suppose, Doctor, that Bardfiske
wanted his Sonchez man but did not have enough
money to pay you.

Maria At this I could not give it to him.

Bardfiske Come on you couldn't make friends so
readily.

Maria Why not pay?

Bardfiske Because I have already given his
money when I pledged his soul in the first place.
If he fails to return the money, then I can
sell the soul to get back my cash. The same goes for your
house. Listen now. Since you did not
return it, it is mine to sell.

Marina I think it's a considerable profit.

Bardfiske A profit of 10%, a loss of 10%. I don't depend
much on luck around you. What's that? Didn't you
believe me, there is a steadily limited market for
second hand novels. The same goes for spectacles.
Or old clothes. Try them on. There aren't a
pair from a box full of spectacles. None in the
books that would lead on those. Old soldiers have
to tie the for these weapons when a war is over,
so they bring them to me. And when they die
their widow can't reuse a loan on these glasses
and spectacles, so they bring them to me. And when
a old widow turns to me, bring, bring done
with their theory and face, they bring it to me
look at all, new caps and compasses,
telescope and old shorts — who wants them?
Who needs them? Yet they bring them to me.
Like it or not Doctor, I need Doctor to Head
town and whatever these old hats bring, they
are golden and champion.

Maria Listen to this, Uncle and quote me a
line. "There must be no room for self
importance in dealing with the bourgeois!"
How much is that worth?

Marina The only thing I can't give you is a price
on Doctor, your theory.

Maria It's a pity you can't write. An excellent
theory will entitle all your theories of tortured
selves.

Bardfiske Just a moment, just a moment. Exactly who is
the bourgeois you bring going on about?

Marina Just the man who owns your shop. For
men who own your house. The man who has
control of the meat ring at Bardfiske. The
bourgeois leads on making money in
commercial confidence, confidence in trade and
traffic.

Bardfiske Sounds very healthy to me. What do
you think, uncle?

Marina Doctor's healthy.

Maria How can you say that? You there in
poverty. Where the streets are most crowded
and the houses, fronting with seduce and
sever, there you live at Bardfiske!

Bardfiske I give credit only when it's required,
Doctor. I bring no one to come here.

Maria What are you telling about? You feed
on people like a raven. You live off dead men's
bones.

Marina Only glass eyes and generally, I was
told they have no more use for them.

Maria Do you know who created it?

THEATRE AUSTRALIAN AUGUST 1984

Bardfiske Oh yeah! Credit, partner, is what
you've been asking off and ever since you come
to Salvo.

Maria Create my dear Bardfiske depends on
exploitation —

Bardfiske Exploitation?

Maria Exploitation of wage labour by capital
of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie!

Bardfiske Or of me by you. Because you
want to the value of 10% and I haven't been
happened yet. You're quick enough to eat what I
give you but slow when it comes to paying.
You're displaying my partner in a very
braggadocious way.

Maria Noooooo! Am I profiting from your
work?

Bardfiske You're living off me — you and your
family. It amounts to profits.

Maria I'll buy any money as all Bardfiske, do you
think I would have been sitting here on a
pawpaw reading my own books?

Bardfiske It's because you can't pay me that
I've got to come here. You hold your books
but I have no money for clothes. That's what I think!

Maria Cleverness, we have reached an
impasse I think. And happens. I am almost here.
Perhaps you might consider that electronic
shambles for our selves in my passing place?

Maria Very place. There is the great spectacle of
the bourgeoisie setting the poor against the poor.
Whatever happens, uncle, you need to join
Marina as leaders.

Bardfiske Doctor Maria —

Maria I have some more pledges before you
come inside.

Bardfiske Hm, what ageing or?

Maria You are not the only one to prove
clothing Bardfiske.

Maria The business is closed for the evening
doctor.

I will accept no more pledges.

Maria One last request. Stan. Chevra.

Marina. It's the last doctor. Come back
Monday.

Maria Get my hat. There on the stand.

Bardfiske But wait a sec —

Maria Get off and I'll explain.

Bardfiske Don't move what's out of the stand.

Maria What? What?

Maria Put it on the counter. Two rods. There
you are ready. Give me a price. I won't get paid
you off.

Maria Very well. There are rigs of course. I
can give you much.

Maria Fix a price to begin with. Never less
Bardfiske. The money from these rigs, we'll keep
the handicrafts fairing on myself Bardfiske!

Maria You are a regular customer of course
uncle —

Bardfiske Maria, you are taking them out you?

Maria Off to collect the doctor.

The others. But you and you are closed.

Maria I am never closed in Bardfiske. The
service you have given me. Then I would say, is a
case of breaking Right doctor?

Maria For the last six days I have been trying
to get you to open and go. My wife is ill and
so are our three month old child. I cannot and
could not call the doctor because I have no money
for medicine. The best thing that could happen
would be for the family to throw us out into the
street. At least I would be open if the 21 come
back. In which case she will be for obliging. I owe
you for name Bardfiske. If she doesn't eat breakfast
the morning, the next night with her tea and the
geographical (geography) how much for her?

Maria That's top.

Maria I owe Bardfiske 10%

Maria It's that we have a

Maria Make it 10% and 10% there in my

brother.
Brother Look, you don't have to do this.
Brother Oh doctor. That's all I can do. But you will buy them in three months. You know that I'm giving you a chance.

Murphy Hear this, Bodilish. We're going into a church. Come on with. I'll give you my兄弟。
Brother I ought to take them off?

Brother I'll give you ten shillings to keep your trousers on! If you start anything else off I'll give you nothing. That's my last and final offer.

Murphy Should I take a Bodilish?

Bodilish Look here, I'll give you your shirt. You don't have to do this.

Murphy But I do have to. If not to pay you, I have to pay off the others. After careful consideration, uncle, I accept.

Murphy Right. Here is your ticket. And here is your money. Go to hell. Now please, just leave, the shop is cleared.

Murphy takes the money, walks away like a robber, scratches a duplicate order and puts them on the day on the quayside. He runs, the bell and the bell ring simultaneously. Murphy runs to Bodilish and hands over the 10/- note.

Murphy Take a Bodilish. In payment for a month's respite.

Bodilish You didn't have to do that, you know.

Murphy Oh, but I did have to. Bodilish. You're only finding a reason of profit because you have seen what I have come to give you the money. If you had, you would have taken the suitcase quite cheerfully. All over Dublin, men do this to find their families. Find your home and it...

Bodilish But I have to do that, and I can't run away either except that note.

Murphy You don't even own that. Anything we have is already on loan. These scoundrels of Barron owns nothing Bodilish.

Murphy Right.

Murphy So why Bodilish, do you so stubbornly resist the institution of property? Why is it so essential to own something?

Bodilish Well, if you own your house or business, you're an upstanding person! See for life I'd be an upstanding person.

Murphy A, Upstanding Ambition.

Bodilish I've got hopes of owning my own shop one day.

Murphy The bourgeoisie had not hope there. Does they have no money. And when you go, let me say, being Bodilish and try to make amends, they will be Bodilish and you.

Bodilish No. It won't happen here. We don't go in for trading around. You might get that sort of trouble abroad, but not here.

Murphy Working men have no country Bodilish doesn't protest.

Uncle The shop is closed.

Murphy However, this continues in England now; it has reached a pitch unparalleled in any other country.

Bodilish How do you know.

Murphy A bourgeoisie with unrepresentable and prodigious forces is concentrated in England by a proletariat — that's you Bodilish — which also has no proletariat at present able concentrations.

Bodilish What do you expect, me to do? Can Uncle do this?

Murphy This shop is closed!

Murphy Your shop is never closed while there are profits to be made. But listen from England and go to the way of Venice and Genoa and Holland — a glass composition of world trade!

The English take the French peninsula, the swallows?

The English have killed the red which flew them.

Uncle I ought to ring his dirty hand bell.

Murphy Is anyone there?

Murphy Yes! We are here, Bodilish and I. Let us start the revolution right now. Bodilish and shake the cockroach in between both.

Bodilish How you can come me out of it for a cent. What you goodhearted?

Murphy Stay where you are outside!

Bodilish Begone to keep you both with interesting subjects.

Murphy Help! Help!

(Bodilish scratches for a better scratch it up for sale)

Murphy Even if anyone could hear you isn't him, they wouldn't lift a finger. And when you lie dead on the floor, they will all pour into the shop to look out the ribbons you have stolen from them over the years.

Murphy No — please —

Murphy Look at that, Bodilish — a wanted man! appearing at a session of vital meaning for the black and white of Meath and Kildare.

Black stage the bell again.

Murphy Please! Please!

Murphy Listen to him squatting for the past minutes of the two hours.

Bodilish Breaking the silence! Here, go away with that!

Murphy Arresting! Arrest Get up. Come on and up!

Murphy Don't touch me! I'll give you back your change.

Murphy Listen to him barking Bodilish. He's not only great when they are concerned. There is only one way of shortening the mandatory death penalty of the old society — revolutionary terrorism.

Uncle begins to ring the bell again.

Murphy Help! Someone for God's sake help.

Murphy Your God will not hear you now.

Murphy Listen the bell from Christ is dead.

Bodilish is passing Bodilish the bell over the door.

Bodilish Hey there's a order coming this way.

Murphy The Devil! Not a word of you! I will show you like a savage.

Police along which the policeman passes.

Bodilish Uncle and saves for funds as if he were a Master of money. The policeman gives Bodilish down the pen and orders.

Bodilish Where? That was a class there.

Murphy (screams) Why did you do that?

Bodilish (screams) Why?

Murphy Put your hands up. You aren't in danger.

Bodilish Yes, I was. What if the police had come in? He would have seen Uncle here, and not over there with you. He might have jumped at the wrong conclusion.

Murphy (screams) Bodilish, you're conclusion?

Bodilish That we were about to give Uncle what for.

Murphy And given what.

Bodilish Not me. No me give. I was just reading my own lesson.

Uncle That right Bodilish. Get the policeman and I won't mention your name.

Bodilish Court? What court?

Murphy When we have that machine charged with unuttered murder.

Uncle replaces the officer.

Murphy No one is going to be charged with anything Uncle. And why? Because nothing happened.

Uncle Are you saying that your trying to split my skull was nothing?

Murphy What's he talking about Bodilish?

Bodilish I don't know you me. I never seen a thing and I've been here the whole time. Uncle.

Murphy Get out the both of you.

Cover (shouts)

Lumumba Is this where you are? You been looking all over?

Uncle takes the opportunity to escape to the back of the shop.

Lumumba (comes) Bodilish Oh hello

Bodilish Hello Lumumba! Shaking up easily. Just get out with my hand for Lumumba.

Lumumba (looking at Bodilish) What's been going on here?

Murphy Bodilish —

Bodilish You garnish?

Murphy If Uncle has gone for a drink this I trust will be as good as your word.

Lumumba What constable? What's been happening?

Bodilish The Doctor here's been sweepings along the shop like a peasant. Give me the right of his life.

Lumumba You've been doing what?

Bodilish (to Uncle) The Devil Uncle you worry doctor like we ought to get out of here before anyone comes.

Murphy Bodilish you stood by me there. Why did you?"

Bodilish We are on that side of the counter about that, aren't we?

Murphy We need members of the proletariat in the party. You and I could start a revolutionary cell.

Bodilish If you and I stay here much longer we'll be stone — at Wimereux Islands. He'll be back in a minute.

Lumumba Who?

Bodilish Uncle and the whole police force. Come on! Alright, here is your own way. See you soon now.

Uncle (shouts)

Murphy A, yes. We could have used someone like Bodilish.

Lumumba I can bring him.

Murphy I know who you mean."

Lumumba If I didn't make eyes at her and wag my tail, we would have run out of meat a long time ago. Come on, Murph. Get your clothes and we'll go.

Murphy I can't. I've pawned them. They were my spouse I sent to pay Bodilish.

Lumumba What, and I have a word to that woman. Oh, this I know, that is I spend weeks looking her off with a pince-nez and he still gets his money. They're going to lose you when you turn up in the British Museum looking like that. Come on, you'd better come home. From what Bodilish says, the place will be surrounded with police in a matter anyway. And Plus Murph is wondering where you are.

Murphy Were there any letters today?

I was hoping that English might have sent money today.

Lumumba Money? What's that? I've forgotten what it looks like.

Murphy (Uncle) pull to me about it. I spent half my life trying to understand how it works and the other had something for it. And look at us! Half naked in the freezing temple made by a high priest who's so entangled with us just we call him "muck". (Lumumba has an answer) Uncle, you're depressed. We shall beat them in the end.

Lumumba Is a not that Reducing me Murph. I can't feel it.

Murphy What's the matter Murph?

Lumumba Uncle! You've got enough problems without me.

Murphy Uncle.

Lumumba I'm needed.

Murphy So is the one. What's latest?

Lumumba Only I'm not laughing.

Murphy Most of us has been on my property. Is it any wonder our bodies taste so cheap. My pockets is a mass of bolts —

Lumumba I don't want to know about it!

Murphy How can our bodies work properly on the food we get?

Lanchester If it was only a month I wouldn't bother asking. But it isn't. I haven't had a period for three months now. And I've been sick too — every morning.

Maria That's just what I need. An if there aren't enough babies in the place.

Lanchester I suppose you think I want to get pregnant?

Maria Fuck those damn laws on my backside, when Francisco hasn't even paid!

Lanchester (sighs) Thanks, Jesus! You could have left me alone. It's a wonder I hasn't happened before the way you've been to me.

Maria Verdianno What a standing joke: "Does you know the latest about Marx?" He's been fucking the servants and she's got a bunch to prove it. How bizarre?

Maria And Jimmy — what is he going to say?

Lanchester Oh stop referring. I've already told her.

Maria (sighs) What exactly have you told her?

Lanchester It is progress of course.

Maria Oh, that's perfect! Perfect! It's not enough for the world to know, so you have to go and tell my wife.

Lanchester She and I did not see enough anyway. I won't be able to take it much longer — honest! I could go bananas (jumps) I'll go if you like.

Maria Go bananas?

Lanchester I don't know. Back to Germany. The Germans would take me back. After all, I was really an ass.

Maria Is that how you thought of yourself — or how I like you?

Lanchester It would be better if I left anyway. Mind, I'm already far enough from home.

Maria You are wanted here. Listen! Needed!

Lanchester Oh? And who wants me? Who wants me?

Maria Who has three children all the time. You don't have to go working across Europe. Please who-did-it that never returns. Look at Schrems.

Lanchester We went off to defeat your honour the first time.

Maria But aren't you trying to do the same thing?

Lanchester Yes! And you didn't stop Schrems from going? Why not?

Maria I am not stopping you. All I am saying is that it's pointless for you to go back to Germany when...

Lanchester You?

Maria What you are needed here.

Lanchester Needed or just useful?

Maria Fuck! Man's needs grow — to work and cook and look after the children.

Lanchester I can wash and cook and look after children in Germany. Do you need me?

Maria Of course I need you! (pauses) I need you to look after Frau Mays.

Lanchester Oh, like...

Maria Phone London. Listen to me! Please!

Lanchester Wait...

Maria Lanchester, are people trees shaped by their work? Who cuts more from their fibres? Look at this place, full of things which have been made and sold! There are pine trees shaped with an even marked ratio. Who controls that ratio? Who says, over a tree, a worth more than that family bobs — or any family for that matter? I'll tell you who — a black German soldier in uniform! He has no bar for enough. The others are written a book but he has to cut a value up every day up there and down there, right down to the last stick.

Lanchester (sighs)?

Maria So I never knew everything. From morning till night I sat in other rooms at Great Russell Street reading Russian history, economic, ecological history, history agricultural chemistry. Now if you leave, I shall have to find the paid work. What sort of work

would that be? Tutor to some kids. More likely, I would say my cleaning chores at Oxford Circus. Under my, our finger of doing my real work — the very reason we came to England — would be banished.

Lanchester Oh your work?

Maria Every my work! Everything will have been workshop. Apprenticeship is over! I can, you know (she pauses), the masters and the slaves — great for nothing! Lanchester, listen we keep the job in view, all our thoughts and feelings will shape the great world about as much as a war between dogs and mice.

Lanchester Well there's another month to feed. We'll have to feed the ones we've got.

Maria Pity you will thank you, Lanchester.

Lanchester It's a pay yesterday not payment instead of me! Get your clothes on and come home to us! Uncle! Are you there?

Maria Who did Jimmy say when you told her you were pregnant?

Lanchester She wasn't nearly delighted. Especially when I told her who the man was. Jimmy.

Lanchester I told her it was Engel.

Maria Engel? (sighs) Is it?

Lanchester Of course not stupid life you.

Maria Always alright. Not so bad. Who is a son of Engel?

Lanchester You well of course. After all, he's your friend.

Maria What? Tell him you tried that? That's not making you pregnant?

Lanchester Since he lives in Manchester and we haven't seen him for months, it's not likely we believe him. Tell him how to say he is the father of the child — or else from Maria, over says anything.

Maria I can't decide.

Lanchester If you want me to say you, well, besides Engel will do it. Hard to continue for you, Maria.

Maria But what on earthlike I say to him?

Lanchester Tell him all about polyamory. And while you're mentioning students to cash out, I'll go and have the child.

Maria I'll tell you what they'll say?

Lanchester You know I will.

Schrems Maria, the front door opens and Maria doesn't even open the door.

Maria The shop is closed.

Lanchester Maria, it's me!

Lanchester I know! Lanchester!

Lanchester I am alive! Maria! Aren't you in the room anymore?

Maria I took Christ three days to run from the bed, it has taken you three months. What says you?

Lanchester Which told everyone he had killed you?

Lanchester Yes, as true I was, left the dead but the bullet only grazed my skin! Then I had to go into hiding. The police not word of it and find a watchman on the post. Finally I have been working with groups in Belgium and France. May I tell them of the work we were doing in London?

Maria That would take three seconds. Schrems, not three months. Nothing is happening in London.

Lanchester But that's not true Maria.

Maria I have been busy saving my skin for four days.

Lanchester Maria, i know you!

Lanchester What's happened?

Lanchester The streets are full of it. You must have heard?

The other doors open and Lanchester enters, breathless.

Lanchester There you are Maria! I've been looking everywhere. That situation has begun!

Lanchester I ignore it! It's me.

Latinas City So you know ... what are you doing here?

Lanchester I'm alive.

Latinas Well now's your chance to get infected again. The invasion has started.

Lanchester I hope I'm still trying to tell the story.

Maria Just a moment. What is all this you are talking about? What revolution? Where?

Latinas There are rioting Hyde Park.

Lanchester At this hour?

Lanchester They say the workers are marching out in their thousands.

Maria Another strike? Workers you say?

Latinas Yes. Mine. Real workers, not a government worker among them.

Lanchester Well Maria! There is not a manager in sight. Let's go.

Maria Just a minute! Schrems. Just a minute. Before we continue, something running the length of Oxford Street and not exactly very hospitable.

Lanchester We are making later selling.

Maria Let us establish once more before we find ourselves engaged in violence. Lanchester came here. Lanchester yourself and tell me what happened. The Revolution will wait.

Latinas Well as I like this. The Chinese attempted to protest against the new Sunday law. Chinese started running from everywhere. All workers' Mass. The new thing was that the police started running too, on full.

Maria (sighs) Oh.

Latinas At first nothing happened but the word breaking. Then the police started getting impatient and used to close the park but there were too many people against the idea.

Lanchester I just seen police were galloping up Oxford Street.

Maria Someone threw something and the police reacted fast. The crowd became enraged and fight began to break out everywhere. Then the police finally began to charge the crowd.

Maria Out of it!

Lanchester Sounds like a real prison.

Maria I think what happened?

Latinas The masses began to realize. They are there near Syphon back. Police have their idea of their losses.

Lanchester It has begun. The revolution has started! Let's go!

Maria It is very possible revolutions. Under the protection of a constitutional monarchy element, have developed which are far more radical than supposed and far greater in number. A revolution is long coming in this country. There were several cases and results of the self-righteousness and attitudes from them.

Lanchester What are you doing?

Maria I am going to cover up policemen.

Lanchester We have any clothes on?

Maria Schrems, not if you can find any clothes, birth — nose, socks and a shirt.

Lanchester I suddenly see a bag.

Maria Better not take off your shirt.

Lanchester Why?

Maria I suddenly realize to start the revolution in the nude.

Lanchester Who can I trust. In take his off?

Lanchester This, why don't you all understand, and brothers the police out of these was.

Maria That's right Schrems. The revolution comes from below.

Lanchester As Schrems begins to undress. After you dress? with Schrems's clothes. Sure. Close your eyes also.

Maria Where are the police, that's what I want to know. You are naked and when you want to come to be found.

Lanchester They're rolling in Hyde Park.

Maria Hyde Park? And what's going on foot of it big talk now?

Lanchester There's pricing underway.

Maria You can do that sort of thing in my

Laura Listen—Shut up or I'll rip your head off!
Merton Right—Lutherford! Are you ready?

Laura Ready.

Merton We'll have to move.

Laura It's a danger. You get a car waiting outside.

Merton A car? What?

Laura Only in London could you get a car
in the middle of the night.

Merton Right! Let's do it again.

Lutherford More—

Merton More? What?

Lutherford Listen here, we're going.

Lutherford You forget this little place is. They
still hold it for a moment then I get killed.

Merton And I suddenly run!

Lutherford The revolution begins and I have

to sit through it like this.

Lutherford I swear Schatzen, you are not fitted
for the job. Be patient, your luck will change.

What do you say, son?

Merton The door is closed.

ACT 3

The scene in *Death Street* sits much later in
Death Street, fully prepared to march the
battle foot on the floor. He begins to make out
Lutherford (singing) Shall I bring a wif'
Leave me gone from the bank room, leaving
the place.

Jessamy No I've finished now.

Lutherford Here we go.

Jessamy Not so well. It'll be good thing when
you and I move. I almost dry my supplies are
the squirrel across. All I can give her is a
miserable smile, and when she gets the case
here poor little me.

Lutherford Don't count on me. I have to think
what my skills will be like after the sort of trials
we've eaten all these years. If only I could get
my hands on some money.

Jessamy What about Engels?

Lutherford What what about him?

Jessamy He must have sent some money.

Lutherford No. Why should he?

Jessamy He is responsible for your condition,
after all.

Lutherford Any money he can spare, he sends
to the Moon. You know that.

Jessamy When was the last time we had
anything from Engels. He's always sent
something in the past. And he must be getting
more than ever now that he's been made a
partner at his father's business. If the money's
not coming here, where is it going?

Lutherford I'm not getting any of his money.
You can be sure of that.

Jessamy I must say I am disappointed in Engels.
I thought he might have had the decency to pay
for his folly.

Lutherford What did you expect from him?

Jessamy That's it. He is the father of your child.

Lutherford He is. I'm not the sort who keeps
count.

Jessamy But I know Engels well. He's just not
the sort of man who runs away. Since he hasn't
told you any money — are you sure I'm right
about that?

Lutherford Positive.

Jessamy Then you must forgive me for thinking
that you may be covering up the identity of the real father.

Lutherford Why should I do that?

Jessamy I don't know why. Unless it was
concerned with someone who didn't want me
to know. Do you understand?

Lutherford I can tell you Engels wasn't too
happy that I'd broken the news to you. I can tell
you.

Jessamy You're just implying now. In question. I
can't remember Engels coming down to London,
not since he aged.

Lutherford Well, he didn't need that through the
years. I can tell you that I would have given the
news to you if I'd known you were so
interested.

Jessamy Don't be distract.

Lutherford Who's being distract? I encourage
the visitors keeping for you and your family and
you anyone else of looking with your husband.

Jessamy Lutherford. That's quite enough of that.

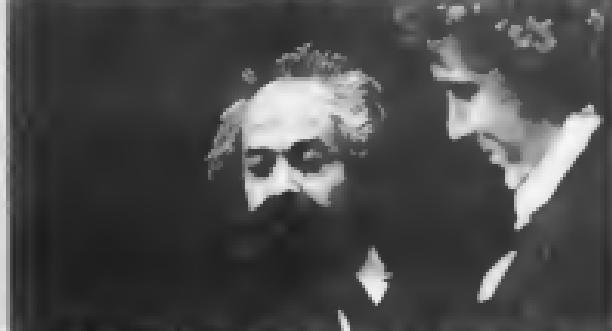
Lutherford What's kept this place together
that's what I like to know. What washed,
cleaned and cooked for you? What you were
lying on your back having one shade after
another. I explained for the last of you.

Jessamy You're forgetting your place.

END OF ACT 2



Ronan Vibert (Engels) and Paul Rapaport (Merton) in the S4.11 production of *Mercy*. Photo: David Mallet



Angela Lansbury (Laura) and Peter MacNicol (Lutherford) in the S4.11 production of *Mercy*. Photo: David Mallet



Ginnifer Goodwin (Jessamy) and Paul Rapaport (Merton) in the S4.11 production of *Mercy*. Photo: David Mallet

Lambeth I'm not forgetting a damsel that? I've just forgotten all remember. How I have handled you by your mother or a working father makes difference and I begin to suspect strong power pull like a lot of water. The only difference is I can't be pleased which is a good quality. At least I did get some rest in Luigi's shop when I don't feel good. As for sleeping well that Harry pic of mine you call a husband —

Dorothy We're going to pass Ashford home too. **Maria** Don't mind me. Get on. Consider what you were saying.

Lambeth English a chain and lead. Is it any wonder I like him?

Angela We were talking about English. He hasn't given Lambeth any money for her continuing. So what?

Lambeth I've never asked him for any money.

Angela He might at least write you.

Lambeth I think he feels he's earned me more than him.

Maria You know well enough why English doesn't want her. It's got nothing to do with Lambeth. You don't approve of him, it's as simple as that.

Angela I don't know. English has always been good to us. Many's the time he's sent us money and we've arranged holidays for us. Always at the clearest hour of course. His training is perfect. In fact I admire English. It's just that I cannot approve of his relationship with that woman.

Maria English has been living with Mary Burns for years now.

Lambeth Perhaps. He likes mad servants. Some men do like.

Angela I think she's very forgetful of a man to do such a thing, take about it and I don't care whether the servants is black or German.

Lambeth He knows you think that, that's why he never comes here.

Angela That's not the point. It's just that a man like English, an employee after all, is taking advantage of his position where he goes about seducing the servants. But in bourgeois circles such men play for their masters at least.

Lambeth Sometimes the servants like it, don't you think, Maria?

Maria Yes. It's very possible. You must think of that possibility. English could then — er — go to her that sort of thing.

Angela I'm appalled that he's simply forgotten about Lambeth.

Maria Maria! Not

Lambeth No he hasn't forgotten, not entirely.

Maria Oh! There, there, you see. Precious wouldn't forget!

Lambeth I'll be to have the baby at a house here in London. Some kind people will look after me.

Angela Surely you'll have your "lady" here.

Lambeth Lambeth. I'll be lost without you too.

Angela What about the baby Lambeth? What will you do?

Lambeth English has thought that too. These people will keep the baby and I'll be able to visit. I can't risk that though, that's right?

Angela Only Lambeth.

Angela Oh Lambeth, I am sorry for what I said.

Maria What did you say?

Angela Forgive me mad. I'm a stupid, selfish woman. Lambeth. Will you ever forgive me?

Lambeth I was a fat cheap repeat customer? I often mistake how the waiters will turn change when the women in there almost as silly as the men.

Maria You're not leaving now, today?

Lambeth I'll be leaving later. Right now I've

got to persuade the proprietress to let me have some vigorous talk. Let me tell you one thing, it's not a decent night centre to beg when you look like that.

Ella Lambeth At the place down the road she rents for a moment everyone will look forever and移移.

Maria How is the baby?

Angela She's not well today.

Maria Oh she'll be simple. Children are stronger than we think.

Angela And more patient too. The others have been troubling her but if they are still awake, will you tell them a story?

Maria Of course dear. Send them here. You just sit and eat my platters. Excellent.

Angela English doesn't care either.

Maria There were lots of exciting things on Potato Street. You could buy pens or colours and lips or oranges and if you had some capital, you could buy all of them. Tea-drinkings and picnics.

If you wanted anything at all, you could buy it on Potato Street and not just things to eat either. You can also walk to Potato Street without paying a fiver to the taxi-driver. Hans Robbie is very tall. The most wonderful things!

No tea-drinkings or picnics. But there were many men and ladies made out of wood. On, all kinds of men. Coloured and coppery. Brothers and sisters. Big legs and queues too. When that happens?

Oh yes, there were not so many "relationships" also, but they lasted their time as the fixtures of the shop.

You see, the master of all these boys was Hans Robbie and he was accustomed to all mankind. And when people passed by those little wooden men and women, what attracted them most of all were the eyes. Yes the eyes. Because the eyes were not made of glass or painted wood as they are with other says. Tea-drinkings, the eyes of these boys were real — as real as yours or mine. They shone and twinkled and cried real tears too — just like yours and mine. And the eyes of the toy girls and boys were real too. The Hans Robbie's great girls were not limited to making men and women. He could make animals too and birds — crows and lions and lions and pumas — all wild real eyes made these little wooden birds.

People would come from all over the country, and from abroad, beyond just to see the wonderful toys made by Hans Robbie. The curious thing was that he would not sell any of them. Not that boy would be sold. It was thought he had no love of them. Sometimes of course a stupid master would stagger into the shop wanting to buy something for one of his special boys. The master would try to bully the proprietor without any success. Then he would go to Hans Robbie, his influence being of service. The benefits of the staff and some service have great large hands believe me. But mostly meant nothing to Hans Robbie because he had a good job which means could not buy his control master toys with real eyes! And none of these boys are for sale and that's that!

Well one day a boy called Conrad came into the shop and he needed something strange about the eyes. If he looked hard enough you could see their eyes were very bad. Conrad used often to visit the shop and sometimes when he looked for a doctor say he caused a bad joke. Once he even asked the proprietor about this and Hans Robbie told him that he had taken it to be repaired. But whenever he used this, the other says, looked around.

That same day Conrad was in the shop suggesting the looks of the face and it was when he was looking at an doll that he — um an old darling. Old as his a week. It was when he was looking at this doll — that's right — that he

heard him announced again. Someone had wanted to buy one of the toys who was a tall thin lady with a very long nose. Hans Robbie was very present. "She has had me something?" said the lady. The proprietor was ashamed. That's right, darling, very ashamed. Then the lady became very rude and indignant. My dear, a something which made Hans Robbie very angry indeed. Hans was black in the face and before you could work an eye — that's right — before you could do that the shop was closed and shut and the blinds drawn. But a short time back Hans Robbie — and young Conrad.

The proprietor, however, had to frightened from that instead of leaving along with everyone else. Conrad had hidden in a cupboard. After several minutes, he was ready to burst out of his hiding place when he heard the sound of someone crying.

Looking through the crack of the door Conrad saw — ah and who did he see on his knees in front of the toy? You see how Hans Robbie and this is what he heard the proprietor say — My darling, I cannot tell you. I wish it could. I could tell you all tomorrow if I could. There would be new faces for all of you, but if I were to tell now — it was clear that Conrad began to dream a flight that could not be had from unfeigned. But it was the smell of something burning. Then he heard the voice that belonged to the burning itself — a smoky dark brown voice.

"Hans Robbie", and this voice, "I have come again."

The proprietor just sat his feet. Conrad could see him clearly, but not the other.

"Take what you have come for and be damned" and Hans Robbie.

The burning could laugh with a harsh laugh.

I have kept my eye of the human now you must keep yours."

"But I made my bargain with you when I was young and foolish", said Hans Robbie.

And you must keep it until you are old and hundred and the tree itself. I have made you the most famous proprietor at the land. Every boy you make has an exact copy of your own eyes. All your hands and hearts and ribs look at the world with your own eyes."

But just look at those eyes!" said the proprietor.

All they see now is the pain of the world past and whereabouts.

An instant you cannot will come to release it from your own past. You must forgive. And now you see old Hans Robbie for price a new toy you make. It will rule and not set away. That was the bargain we struck years ago. You love your flower...and the world. "It may not what it looks". Then Hans Robbie said. "They will grow all my life long" and "What will you do then? O Lord of the Fleets?" For indeed it was the devil he was talking to. Satan laughed.

If you all or prove truly so much as one joy, all other eyes will vanish and you yourself will be as blind as a worm.

As Hans Robbie had stood a post with the devil and there was no getting away from it.

"Now which one shall I take today" asked the devil.

"Take that one", said Hans Robbie. "I agree to wringing queen."

The devil laughed and the snapper became a bird and the fox became — silence. It was quiet as the library.

Conrad waited a long time before he crept from the cupboard. It was night time. The proprietor was sitting hunched at his veg籃籃 with his head on his hands. Conrad could see a spot where the king had been. As for the rest of the toys they stood there sitting nothing, then

woman tongue locked behind their whale-lips. As he walks through the door to the front door, I could hear her laughing him following him, laughing at me.
I sprang from my chair as she took room
Maura And a boy today?
Jenny! All three. And the baby you think
God? What story did you tell them tonight?
Maura! Backie! I'm mystified!
Jenny! It's a wonder these children sleep at all
Let you see how the world was out of them!
Maura! Children enjoy simple stories. It appeals
to their natural state of innocence. Only adults
confuse poison with innocence. Children have a
great deal to teach us. So love little Jenny's
innocence too.

Jenny! Who had the man to know about this?
Maura! How could Harry Radcliffe pay that sum if
he couldn't sell when he made. That child has the
markings of a political assassin.

Jenny! How did you notice that come?

Maura! I said the dead was the standard one. She
understands that single answer. The only I
asked you say?"

Jenny! Yes.

Maura! Well that would let us off.

Jenny! If you want it's not a healthy sleep
that's not well. I can't feed her properly and
nurture and take care of the child too. What can
I do? Please give me some help! Oh please! I
can't!

Maura! Hush! It's the damned place Jennylyn
lets a woman over the roof need but she'll be
sighted. You'd see. She's a strong baby.
Puritan! See the states in their Puritan
ways.

Jenny! Let me kiss the others. Maura! She's
another now so strong. Her skin is tan and
firm. Not this place. Can I tell her Maura?

Maura! Leave her where? We have no money
now! I can't think what happened to Evelyn.
Why didn't he wait until Harry? Sorry? But
don't worry! Things must change since A
newspaper in New York seems interested in
taking my notes. And that uncle of yours — he
must be back. In addition and how the rich
seems to live better.

Jenny! I had another letter from the doctor
this morning. The third this month.

Maura! Doctor doctors. Did they tell people and
then warn us to get lost?

Jenny! We shall have to call him again for
Evelyn. He won't come unless we can give
him something.

Maura! Jennylyn! Not have no money greater
We can give him nothing.

Jenny! He is the last doctor to write now to
Maura! May may pay her something.

Maura! This Dr. is making demands because he
himself is at the very brink of bankruptcy. When
I see him next I will have to talk with him.

Jenny! And that will be the last of him. Why
drive everyone away from us. He only came
because he needed us.

Maura! I do not want his chance pay. If he
comes here again I'll give him pay back in his
face.

Jenny! We can't give him pay. Hoping
he would leave New York hoping to locate
from Evelyn or for my uncle in the One all at
one with. Maura! Please.

Maura! You are an well enough the children
are too young and I work already. The subject is
closed.

Jenny! The salopettes are closed. Every day
you go off to the Museum and read that Rose! I
spend all day here, sleep and eat. The children
now I well eat and there always someone
swinging on the door wanting money, payment
for the day that I give for a walk. I've
parted down the streets by speakers. And
where can I walk? To the government to view the

last few things, we used to travel? Moon, how
much do you have to know in that history?

Maura! I don't know everything.

Jenny! Look out the window. You can see over
there what you could wish will tell you. All the
messiness and poverty and melancholia is out
there. And we have come here all those
things have come up the years and second when
the dust and our lives. If ever may here, we'll die
in the game all us. If they you know do
something. I'm prancing out of here.

Maura! Those things were here before we came
the poverty and melancholia. They were
waying but as I think. From the time we were
young and talked of changing the world. Believe
me. Jennifer there is no danger of my being
lost in books. Books have taught me more often
than any book exactly how the poor do. I travel
in my fourth century when I would have learned
more than I have in the last two centuries. But living
unconscious, a person never served anyone from a
player's point. Unless I can understand, clearly
and completely understand why some people out
there are in the messes of others. Then we might
as well have turned our converges, shaped
heart and church and all that.

Jenny! The baby is sick Moon.

Maura! What can I say? I sometimes say I am sorry
we ever met on that I can't say we had children.
I can't speak. Whenever I pass Linda's. I often
think over. There been nothing but a
gambler's benefit. But we have been provided
such a lot yet and one thing you will not find in
Linda's windows and that is my love for you. If
any of these generations will prove false act for
my heart here I swear it is you bring us.

Jenny! I doubt that it's going to mean for us
either — she looks off Moon.

Maura! You. I am just smitten by Moon and I love
you more deeply than all Moon of Venus that
loved. And it is love — not of material as the
prostitution — but lots of you my dying, that
makes me a man again. This might is a moment
make lovely women but where shall I find
another Jennifer? As I look on you all my
survives are in melting slides here! If I lost
you all my pain and life. In your arms my
lorn survives should be nothing. Let the
blame keep them unspent here and
Christian like a memory. What I have cannot be
tamed by the like and competing world.

Jenny! I never should you Moon! Only myself! I
doubt there is one thing but here can I play that
off? We are not surviving for Maura.

Maura! You live in a society that is rising like a
cancer. It is a growing at birth of bad systems.

Jenny! We are getting away with it. Can you tell
me I have. Jennifer is part of this culture.

Maura! There is only one way of becoming, the
right path of the old world. And that is by
revolutionary action. Tactics and the world
will bring them in their ways. We might have
had a revolution here. The ones in India. People
might have been perished with the hedges of
fencing around them. like the noble looked out
they showed sun and I look these eyes for
answers.

Jenny! You should know the English by now
They are not a vicious people.

Maura! Honey Moon. Why are you going to the
rest of the world. There they were the census
book and other health forms in their coaches
and form with licensed midwives. They would stand
in and tick, and tap up a label of swimming, green
and travel championships. For language research in
shorts as English.

After they stepped into the last room. John is
half aware of this and her friend her mother
coughs. But when Moon appears the bearing both of the
cared — bring nothing myself! Her painted
strength turned towards my part of the crowd
and held out her prayerbook in her morning
hand. And my dear, the whole crowd joined us
and "Give us no year longer so I can!" Then the
rest broke it and fled. It was a glorious scene.
I personally however the one of a square white and
walking with pony. He responded to a pig.
Then the police arrived. There lie all in one way.
the force that kept all the powdered sweepers in
their coaches. The afternoon began with great
hopes. It ended with government power. The law
and the committee with hot water pistol packets,
which had just a audience.

Jenny! Rivers moving ached.
Jenny! I'm going to get the doctor.
Maura! I've already asked him. He isn't coming.
Jenny! I want to leave. I have used the stairs. Maura!
Maura! What?
Jenny! Blot her head with water.
Jenny! Rivers changed the focus above. Maura goes
over the hard rocks long enough to look at the
falling water clear!

Maura! I leave!
Jenny! Rivers moving ached.
Jenny! I'm going to get the doctor.
Maura! I've already asked him. He isn't coming.
Jenny! I want to leave. I have used the stairs. Maura!
Maura! What?
Jenny! Blot her head with water.
Jenny! Rivers changed the focus above. Maura goes
over the hard rocks long enough to look at the
falling water clear!

Maura! I leave!
Jenny! Rivers moving ached.
Jenny! The rocks. She had never passed
them before down the rest of the stairs. We
refused to accept like death. Maura can't breath
and leaves the head in its hands. As she walks
around the room, she's at first muttering half
phrases in German. As the gears seem to begin
to turn. Always out of the way — return for Angels
and He begins to sing in German.

Maura! Verfürth, we're still, religious.
Catholic. Ruth and I? She was stark with
silence. She was not. She sells girls but
marriage will end up in the supposed
Sorcery or studies issues? Do we like selling
it to include our babies blessed?

Jenny! That English governed? Games on hell?
Cold and dead? She was wrong. I never saw
such. This shall pass for even about. I will
make claim there on these ones that. She will
gather the ones of us?

It was exhausted almost. A knock at the door
Jenny! Shallow.
Buddhists! Having a party and set? Selected like
Guru Pashchim.
Maura! Have you come to torment me the
old Buddha?

Buddhist! I was downstairs when I saw Mrs.
Mauri my own! I thought a night for a good
time for us to have a bit of a chat for.
Maura! I have no money. Go away.
Buddhists! Not so quick, not so quick. I don't
want no money. Heard.

Maura! When do you want (bedroom)? Tell me and
get me.

Buddhists! Lucy says. You're not all alone.
You come to have a little chat him. But a chat
you're.

Maura! There is no point telling me past here.
Buddhists! Revolution. Buddhist. I am
impaired with the English says. Its called
Buddhism all week.

Buddhists! Oh you want to see Hyde Park.
simply did you? Very many I listed. I can't have
been home when you right a thousand ago. What
was going on in her?

Maura! I am not a person now. Make
your business Buddhist.

Buddhists! Ah yes. I will. I've heard about
Lucy. Mrs. Deneath.

Maura! What about Mrs. Deneath?

Buddhists! Well you did. she was the family way.
Maura! Considering that she is now another
pregnant. I am forced to give you full marks for
about that blood!

Buddhists! I carry of a gun now.
Maura! Are you about in till you past, you are
the author child's father.
Buddhists! Well, and I myself, as it happens.
Maura! You don't feel in the past?
Buddhists! Exactly on. What I was going to say.

who I would trust.

Maria Mind what? Where mind? Mind whose? **Beafield** Bring me dad! Looking after it and other questions When I am trying to say all of that I have got I'll tell my dad. **Lorraine** What Beafield is you understand me or not?

Maria What does she say to that?

Beafield She asked me to tell you.

Maria Did she? I don't think why. She can do as she likes.

Beafield Well she doesn't think that. You being her mother and all.

Maria She told you that?

Beafield Not and she was some kind of working person to you and Mrs. May.

Maria Beafield did Miss Demuth tell you who looked after the child?

Beafield No. But then don't worry me you just I was adopted myself. She said it was some foreigner.

Maria Beafield Miss Demuth is not my property. I do not own her. If she wants to marry you she is free to. If she does not she says, fine with us.

Beafield That's nice now we're objectives.

Maria I have more now. Whatever's important that I cannot speak for the Beafields, you Beafielders.

Beafield Why?

Maria The mother of Mrs. May.

Beafield What's she got to do about it?

Maria When my son and I were living on Beafield's little denry was a poor old lady was about to be born. My mother-in-law the Beafield was Westphalen. Turn us, her own personal maid — Lorraine. Miss Demuth! So I married him he considered that his future I suggest you consult the Beafields.

Beafield Come all at you now. You mean I've got to go all the way to Germany?

Maria I don't know. She has never died.

Beafield You're not trying to insult me? Maria? At what point are you going to do? Still let me tell you again you don't going to get rid of me that easy. Not by a long shot. Do you know why? It wouldn't surprise me if you were the baby's mother! There is a secret. You didn't want to let go of your little bit to the side she gets.

Maria So the child's percentage does appear to you?

Beafield Well, I have thought about it, yes.

Maria Let's not.

Beafield There you listen to me —

Maria Now come up here with your today you continue to repeat a little prating words you're nothing better than a simpleton and a sillybores. Scold back to you till disappeared!

Beafield Right. So more trash for you!

Slowly speaks and Lorraine enters, carrying a small package.

Lorraine Oh brother Maria! What are you doing now at this stupid old woman?

Maria You're not.

Beafield I looked him Lorraine. His family I am still by him.

Lorraine I managed to get some pleasure.

Maria I ate Mac?

Beafield No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no,

Beafield I can't help a word with you for a moment Lorraine! Ahem!

Maria When you manage to shake off the bushes I would like to talk to you about other questions like the last time.

Beafield Well, whatever?

Beafield I asked from like you said that he's a mother.

Lorraine Is he?

Beafield Come on, Lorraine. I can get out of here. Come talk to me.

Lorraine There's a habit in there, and she's got. This is full of lies mixed with words, and all

you you do will hear to a no giving any more.

Beafield He didn't mention a sick baby. How can I be known? All we talked about was you and us getting married.

Lorraine So far gave his parents news?

Beafield No, not I need no permission. Lorraine. Let's go home.

Lorraine Did he tell you he's? Answer! I'll ask him if you work?

Beafield I don't know what he was up to life and you was owned by some disease or something. Someone dead? You can't talk to her.

Lorraine Did he tell you she Beafield was dead?

Beafield Beafield power has she?

Lorraine Who did for my about this? She goes in for her unknown child?

Beafield Lorraine of us has the father who does not pay up we Lorraine was a decent manager to me. I'm just someone who works to be fed, isn't it? I can't call you stuck in you. I give more than you would if you played her.

Lorraine Like you here are also who I says here Beafield?

Beafield Once I suppose because you was some kind of girl. But you don't have to stay. You are a bigger slave. I've been.

Lorraine Beafield, when you asked me I could have sleep with each other.

Beafield Well, I am waiting for an answer.

Lorraine Beafield my answer. There's more to life than food meal.

Beafield Uh?

Lorraine You're a good man Beafield but I'll say again. Thank you.

Beafield Good. I gives you lots of good for a brother around here. All right that. But as soon as your Beafield start thinking you all come crowding to the. What are you for doing like that? What are you path are you running?

Lorraine I am a religious.

Beafield You'll need a son, so as before. But comes up the street. You, all others are not you and them for all you too great. Beafield others and angry, violent. The lot of you. As soon as stop picking a bit, think you get me. I'm sorry, you must make always run for Beafield, his wife.

Lorraine I put in my bag too.

Beafield See, and I don't like like them others with others. Why don't you come. Come, Lorraine.

Lorraine I can't?

Beafield I know it's like. It's trying to do enough.

Lorraine I'm trying to do enough, too.

Beafield You've got to eat. You eat, I'll tell you to be had. I'm sorry like the last time.

Lorraine I am Beafield, not something?

Beafield Well, what is?

Lorraine I could I have no change, a moment.

Beafield I turned you up for a dress.

Beafield We go over the road. We go to the top of the stairs.

Lorraine Well, can I?

Beafield Come the bottom of the stairs I'll see it. Beafield, Lorraine enters. Our room down stairs from the back room. They look at each other.

Lorraine Now's the today? Let me look. Let me look. Maria.

Maria She is sleeping. Lorraine. Likes doesn't not.

Lorraine Maria! Maria!

Maria I don't know.

Lorraine Here! The flower's gone there!

Maria You the most a part.

Lorraine Why has Maria. Maria gone to a doctor?

Maria To make sure you're dead won't? Are you going off with this trademan?

Lorraine I can't say I wasn't surprised. A bit of peace and quiet and proper meals. But I couldn't be a Maria. I'd be back never before long and he wouldn't be able to show his face in the streets. I like you much as do than as this. Beginning to pack his luggage, steps onto a big Army. I've found this family to take me in while I have the baby. They I think of it, it too.

Maria You're not keeping a?

Lorraine It's like all your others. It come out the image of you. And we can't have that, can we?

Maria Before you a baby and then observe you out. It is a double crime.

Lorraine Don't be angry Maria. There are too many mistakes here in it. They'll let me now. Well, I must be on my way. It's going to start soon. I may feel I even had to sit down on my way back here. I don't want to have the first impression of I can possibly help in getting Maria. Maria! This my dear?

Lorraine Maria! Maria! What name shall I put on the birth certificate?

Maria I would prefer it was not mine. Our marriage would result.

Lorraine Will you pay down Engels?

Maria So life has had enough riding already. Guess you feel bad.

Lorraine I'll give a hand. One other thing.

Maria Tell?

Lorraine Why did you tell Beafield the Beafields, was didn't? Please let me see the letters before I go.

Maria I would rather you didn't. They have all just got to sleep and you know what a light sleeper Lorraine is.

Lorraine Well, I suppose I shall see them all soon enough.

Maria You are strong, Lorraine. The strongest of all. Your body will sleep like a well-tired, determine.

Lorraine If it doesn't don't forget me for a while. One year's a short time.

Maria When's this?

Lorraine As soon as you. From Engels.

Maria Maria! Maria!

Lorraine Don't open it until I go.

Maria Maria! Maria! Good-bye.

Lorraine Wish you luck.

Maria Lorraine! Maria! catches her go away the others who she never Jimmy and the Doctor. Maria! Maria! or others.

Lorraine Doctor?

Doctor Hello there Miss Demuth.

Beafield It's the Miss Maria. Lorraine.

Lorraine Yes, he is. I'm going now. I'll only be with us.

Doctor Good-bye.

Maria She's arrived in the room and taken up the envelope and given it a kiss. The other of the room opens and Jimmy comes with the Doctor.

Maria Good evening Doctor.

Doctor Beafield is this why I came?

Maria Please nothing.

Doctor Miss Beafield, from Maria —

Maria I am a doctor say I remember. A real one in point of fact. A doctor of philosophy.

Doctor Very well — doctor. Small I took as you should — a bit?

Maria But you want some money then, about you.

Doctor I do prefer to get paid. If you had paid me the my wife Beafielders and yours. I

would have come earlier. It is only the meager
pledging of your wife at my house which has
made me open my eyes at all. Now, may I tell the
truth?"

Maria: But surely you would like to get paid?
They tell me all where's do.

Doctor: Now look there Maria — very well,
Doctor Maria. I've not come here to be blamed
by you. You've used our money for necessities.
This means a full of rock chicken. I've got my
name on one, owing half of them. At least other
people think so after saying that does.

Maria: Ah! So that's it. You are a Doctor of
Debt Collecting. I know such a description existed
but not that it was recognized by a French
University.

He has been among Engel's deer or the
Doctors' deer. Doctor comes out of the back
rooms.

Jeanne: Oh stop it. Let him go. You can go
Doctor. You're invited.

Duchess: Buy the deer —
dressing: She's dead. Oh my God, why didn't I pre-
vent that? What did I kill her? Why?

Maria: Keeping the envelope! He was too busy
counting his money than a wife.

Duchess: My sorry poor baby has died. Mrs.
Maria, that you have too many deer in this
strange room. My advice is to sleep right away
from here before you die. Now, if you would
be so good as to let me see the body, I will give
you a death certificate.

Maria: Looking at the deer! We are out of luck
with Engel's deer. He writes that he has been
given a house by his father. He cannot send us
any money at present because his mother buy food
for the house. A horse after all has a right to
live, does it not? A horse must have hay
and new shoes. If our baby had been a horse
doctor would it have survived. Would you have
prescribed hay? "Yes?" "Would you?"

Doctor: It is natural for you to be upset.
Doctor Maria. Let me give you a volume.
Would you like another Mrs. Maria?

Maria: Oh would you suggest making hay while
the sun shines doctor? Making money while
chances are by the doors?

Doctor: What is God's name are you talking
about?

Maria: Is that what you would recommend? Is
that what you would advise? "It's a doctor."

Doctor: There you take half of your wages?

Maria: Yes, I have! I don't want... come! What
is the point of having wages when they are
surpassed by vicious greedy ugly Jews like
yourself?

Doctor: What are you saying now? You're
driven mad.

Maria: Quite right doctor. My family tree is
growing with nodes. But my father carried his
back on all that mountain. He passed his mind
away from greed and death and hay. Get out of
my house, put yesterday your shadow down
down Dead Streets children die.

The Doctor runs and leaves.

Maria: You go! Go now before I make you eat
my daughter's carpet.

Maria: Please... Please...

Jeanne: Wish you begged over money... she
did!

Maria: Not true. She was said before you left
for the doctor. You you wouldn't accept it
because you dead before you left the house
and I think you know it. If anyone killed her it
was that begging vampire. He should have
come earlier.

Jeanne: Doctor! Why not tell you? What's the
point?

Maria: I know just how much it hurts. That's
why

Jeanne: Isn't there enough pain as it is? Do you
have to cause more?

Maria: The pain is this life, like the wealth,
needs rechristen.

Jeanne: You're like a gone Maria, our little one
Maria: Baby her. Baby her.

Jeanne: I've missed her before.

Maria: Love for what? Baby? No, we play a
body out our little Princess. She is scared all
the sickness and suffering, and stupidity we call
life.

Jeanne: And Lucifer's gone. I didn't say a
proper goodbye to her.

Maria: She'll be back soon.

Jeanne: What's she saying? I should go and
help her. She has done so much for us.

Maria: Rest now. You must rest.

Jeanne: How can I? The child has to be born
and a coffin goes there somewhere. And there's
nothing from hospital?

Maria: He used her "best wares." Unless I'm
burrying babies.

Ludmilla and **Schommer** are coming up the
stairs.

Ludmilla: Well we're sure to see some action
now.

Schommer: Trust the French. They cannot
breath without a uniform to bind them.

Jeanne: Jeanne. Having dinner now goes into
the back room.

Lidia: Have you seen the report? Maria, have
you heard about Louis Napoleon?

Schommer: The master's planing has made
me think a little stronger.

Maria: What news is this? Louis Napoleon, you
say?

Lidia: He has staged a coup d'état.

Schommer: History's either been done or made.

Lidia: He is on his road, Komrad.

Maria: Well, well! That French has a long
memory and it's well on the Name: Louis
Napoleon sir? An adventurer who upon the
shores of chunky nation whose oligarchies he
has swindled with noise and savagery.

Lidia: Right first time!

Maria: So down gentlemen. We cannot let this
go without a game of chess. Be a sensible chess
player Schommer. I have not looked the chess
set yet. See if there is my new left Lubomirski, will
you? What do you think supported this new
French made?

Schommer: Not the Bourbons?

Maria: Probably not. Who would want to gain?

Lidia: The small holding peasants.

Maria: Right. The first Napoleon gave them
that and to sell the old small holding peasants.

From a cast mass in France.

Jeany, a stranger from the dark room.

Jeanne: Before you leave gentlemen —

Schommer and **Lubomirski** stand.

Jeanne: Good evening. Fine mass. How is
little France?

Maria: She died today. So down both of you

therefore.

Jeanne: Do either of you gentlemen have any
money?

Lidia: Well I have a little set.

Jeanne: I do not care.

Schommer: Here is none. No Lubomirski you
know from the Adams/Lubomirski hasn't eaten
today.

Maria: I have no?

Lidia: Oh I'm not smelling roses.

Maria: Keep your money Lubomirski. It is better
the living should eat than the dead be hungry
in hell.

Jeanne: I should get some kind of a box with
the Schommer about you.

Schommer: I am sorry to have shamed the family.
Jeanne! Could I ask another favour? Lubomirski?

Schommer: Of course. Please.

Maria: Set up the old Lubomirski.

Jeanne: I have wrapped the sets in a sheet, but
I cannot bring myself to hold her without crying.

Schommer: I will get her off of course.

Put Schommer to her back room.

Jeanne: If we go to the hospital, they will know
what to put a coffin on you then?

Lidia: You. They will be sure to know. Certainly
they will know.

Schommer or another carrying the body as a sheet.

Jeanne: You go!

Give Jesus and Lazarus.

Schommer: Mrs. Maria finished setting up the
other pieces.

Maria: Come along Lubomirski. So, they have
made that gaudy paper king of the French.
Louis Napoleon. His very name has that ring of
conqueror to it. He has come from his path of
many sins and savagery for what? For whose
sins and failures. In the meantime, children die
big flies at summer end.

Maria: Bloody Moon. You lead!

Maria: What is to be done? First peasant and
peasant. And then — pdf? Return to little
Jesu?

END OF PLAY



Paul Lavers (right) and Elizabeth Iddon, 1993

Photo: David Mallet

QUOTES & QUERIES

(Continued from page 1)

of Artistic Director Sir Robert became the Board's intention about the moment he available for further known to us.

His credentials speak for themselves, for example he has had an extensive working relationship with the Old Vic Company both as an actor and director. He has worked with the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre Company at Stratford-on-Avon and been actively associated with such influential groups of the theatre as Michael Redgrave, Sir Peter Hall, the Old Vic Company and the late Tyrone Guthrie.

He is a vibrant and continuing professional with an entirely measured understanding of the relationship between classical arts and the box office.

The Board is very pleased to extend the invitation of its artistic policies to this great Englishman.

Sir Robert Helpmann: "I am delighted to accept the invitation to join the Taxis and to further the long personal association I have had with the dramatic theatre.

I will develop my creative energies to the most exciting and challenging job concerning with the responsibilities I have in my present circumstances.

It would be premature for me to say nothing now about some of the changes I have in mind but I have many ideas on which I am already working.

The time has a very strong following and it will be my intention to do an artistic job which will create a period of most encouraging interest for Sydney.

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Glenn will give one performance in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide between August 15th and 23rd.

International

(Continued from page 17)

assured us simply they seem to set the "Toppermost" of it all without asking themselves or what it costs. Within Japan there are many different Japanese, however. The language, the presentation styles, the themes and predictions have much more variety than they do say in Australian theatre. Our theatre has drawn on learned sources. Japanese theatre has drawn on China, Europe and America, and of course on native special long explorations.

When the best of Japanese theatre here is a communion on a special manner of presentation. The most efficient Japanese theatre has always been monotheatrical in the sense of an actor, not the city. And it's able to project a particular style to an international audience. Each good Japanese presentation realises the drama. The art has never been more than one of love or life elements as a production, the fusion of equals if anything. And Japanese students have the pleasure to follow a

particular group to perfect a new style. That's why some compositions of actors and directors calling themselves theatres don't work. They never get to the destination before they find themselves going back to the beginning.

P.S. I have just received a letter from Santa Adelita with your information on developments of recent days. I have excerpted small parts of that letter to add to the above article.

Issue Number 1 latest play The Tale of Princess Mononoke is set in the Sangoku in Italy directed by Kenzo Koishi. This Tokyo season follows a lesson in the geography of Japan. It appears to be a Tolkaic version of the Geisha legend.

Mark Taro's latest version till the end of June at Teatrino in Tokyo. It was disappointed in it. It was called The Story of the Geisha.

"There is future. Saison" a rock opera opened at the Seibu Theatre on 12 June and Terayama Shûji's new play (try) in a岩 apparently did well in London recently and opened at the end of June in Koenkobashi Hall in Memphis (Tennessee).

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Just what is a classic?

"Never but never dance to the music of Delibes," wrote Isadora Duncan in one of her letters to the world. "It is all surface, gaiety and sentiment; there is no music for the soul and the spirit."

Yes well, by this stage Miss Duncan, whatever her other achievements, was well noted for her musical insights (leading to the libidinous symphonies that had so needful her embellishment). Whatever else our wants may be to measure the "soul and spirit" in a piece of music, the sensibility is superficial only in a superficial (interior) vision. Hopkins and Robson were not superficial thinkers when they considered Delibes's *J. Apache shall call it in Pines* for a ballet. Robson himself has said that *Pines* is practically fool proof, only a rank amateur could look bad in it. That's true as far as it goes, but it takes a great dancer to touch all the nuances and highlights in the work and not just reveal one aspect at a time.

Myself set his heart in a wooden globe with sympathy that seemed to have stopped right off an Able race. Robson, 1952 synopsized it in a dance studio on a hot afternoon. Instead of nymphs and shey beds coming away without two adolescent dancers stretching, posing, analysing themselves and discovering their innate sensuality. But, at another textual level, they don't do it for themselves but for an imaginary static mirror that stretches along the front of the stage, where the audience is. So, to a degree it is impersonal and cool, the work becomes a closed universe, a self-contained lyrical work of art, here than sculpture because it occupies space, doesn't merely occupy it.

Like all dance, it asks questions of its audience, not only on a cerebral level, but

on an imaginative, emotional and philosophical one as well. Is it reality that we experienced here, or a dream, is it an actual encounter or a "fictitious" one, is the final analysis, regarding this score, an act watching two dancers, or their reflection?

As to the performers in this Australian *Pines*, all of them revealed something about the work, none of them can exceed it really, but has only been achieved by its original cast of Eddie Vilaine and Tatyana Lebedeva. Put something of all of these four close together however and you have a measure of the work's greatness.

The opening night cast of Gary Norman and Marilyn Rose were curiously sympathetic, Norman conveying the serpentine sensuality of the *Pines* and Rose the "cold" detachment of the girl, but they didn't connect. Craig Siering and Christine Walsh missed the dual encounter aspect, both explorative of this elusive "accident" but this more. Rita Stanton and Michaela Kortkoff, for once, didn't work at all. It was here a "fictitious", stripped of all wonderment and joy as if these were two hardened prostitutes who had gone through it all before. Robson has said himself that *Pines* can only really work when both dancers have a "virginal" quality about their movement and an added, at the awakening to sensuality that makes.

Of all the *Pines*, David Burch was the most complete and satisfactory. He looked like a started boy, he had, that air of discovery and tentatively handled the girl as if she were part apparition, part comic fantasy and part "technical associate". Marilyn Rose seemed to be more of a case

here, more the leaning dams, the pret little ballerinas who'd washed her hair and come into the studio to pose, and far more the distant "strength" around whom the possibility of experiencing a loss after being like a wife but delicate perfume. It was a lovely version and I hope it grows (but I think would be the ideal partnership would be David Burch and the Dance Company's Steven da Costa, but...).

No matter what the case was, the production of *Pines* made up for the napping nature of Maxine's *Marsella*. A question of tragic dancing but to hear so many and the curiously isolated and half baked configurations of Graeme Murphy's *Taklamakan*.

I found that less of the dances in the *AB* gave the choreographer any help or inspiration in the creation of this work and I'm afraid it shows. (But then what can you expect when the Administration demands a continually high performance level, an exploration of our product. Once again am I who can be imagined?)

Murphy notes that he wanted to illustrate in dance terms the architecture and sculpture of Spanish born Eric Gaudí. It strikes me that he had this concrete image too firmly in his mind and when the dancers didn't give a damn, that "image" just took over and colored the work of this spontaneously done. Of Murphy's girls is no greater expectation as to how a dancer phrase should progress. He creates disconcerting and fascinating twists in a moment and makes it look fresh. However in some of his former work and to a larger extent here in *Taklamakan*, this individualism seems to be an affectation, a conscious striving for a signature style. I do wish he'd relax. Unexpected poses and

D

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Advanced configurations are all very well but they tend after a while to become static - computer programmed even.

Tobkin progresses by memory paths, in other words. Gisèle's architecture told that Tim at that location with that movement. Mass and line are used for a summary purpose shapes and angles gather and disperse to other ends than to gather and disperse. It is fractured that one can always see the location lines from geometric telecomic plates from which I think the work does not life but has a kind of progression a predictable one even.

But that everything in the work is a mass there are marvelous instances in it and in particular where at the beginning and end of the piece the corps as a single body sweeps around the stage leaving a bundle of colours like driftwood on the sea shore and gathers them up later. One does in particular dance with exemplary precision. By Ross Streeten and Christine Woods splits and turns the protagonists like some human equivalent of mass and space and their realising of each other, but that's just it it seems an impression.

The dancer in *Yan Fehi* was interesting in his own right. He didn't detract from the dancing, enhancing it even, acting almost like some calligraphic clue to the going on stage, and as such was most welcome.

I fear that Zefira came upon Murphy too soon after her debut in *Pappy* and the work subsequently took root, wondering around looking for something. It wasn't emphatic enough, it wasn't fluid or alive enough, really it wasn't anything enough.

No other were the earlier performances of Cranko's *Romeo* and *Juliet* which as far as I was concerned were a slap in the face after the incandescent performances the work received here in Sydney back in 1974. The choreography looked half remembered, the dancers went through it by rote. Only Marilyn Jones used the opening night with her warm portrayal of Juliet but even she seemed to play one note too often. All the anguish of love and emotional annotation was there but I missed the growth of Juliet from the innocent green girl to the deeply resolved woman in the drama's end.

Ross Streeten and Michael Kirkobitz舞到了 as odd as the second cast of Steven Streeten danced and re-enacted constantly around looking for Romeo but didn't ever seem to find him and Kirkobitz a portrait of Juliet looked like a super-imposed one from the outside. Then danced their duets unconvincingly but fitfully well, and there has to be lots more of Cranko's epic poem is going to live. Alan Alder glowed and hopped endlessly from start to finish, patched in such an emotional sweep all the time that when he was called off the bus nearly thankful that a street pork butcher had been dispatched and one wickedish whip Lady Capulet was making off the bus as he his latest kill.

Tim Stimpson in a later cast was much more understanding in this role and gave the rest of the cast an object lesson in acting technique. His Tybalt didn't just plug into the presidential violin at the beginning and



Cary Norman and Marilyn Brown in the AB's *Afternoon of a Faun*.
Photo: Bruce Glass

beginning along our a small the end, the man truly relevance for Juliet's safety when he caught her flirting with the untiring Romeo at the ball. Stimpson read his lines to hold up the performance from the rest of the cast but it was a losing battle mainly because the orchestra seemed to be dropping off from borders.

The Elmhurst/Sydney orchestra can rise to quite capable heights when under the baton of a Bouyou or a Tufano, but here under Robert Room it literally plodded its way through Prokofiev's passionate score.

But perhaps this is all symptomatic of the rising tone being held at the Australian Ballet these days by the Administration at least had the cheapest means possible to achieve the greatest box office return. I can understand why it wants the AB to have proper administration and rehearsal quarters in Melbourne but one wonders what they will do when they find themselves in their bright shiny new quarters with a demoralised company. Dislodged music room, losing orchestra, and a staggering price.

rec'd company. Dislodged music room, losing orchestra, and a staggering price.

The Administration (Peter Belaford) give credence to a programme note whereby to the fact that the AB is a classical company founded on the classical techniques (as in the New York City Ballet Mr Balfe but go on). As such it doubts very much whether it should concern itself with these "modern works with their contractions and writhings and... exceptions" (as in). (Murphy's feeling by himself) It thinks it should focus only on the "classical" works.

Apart from all the subjective value judgments raving around one could ask What is it about? Technically the Swan Lake was "classical" on its day, the Ballet Russes works were "exceptional" over and people based Martha Graham when she first started out now all of those processes by common consent, "classical".

The rest of the world seems to have moved since then and only the Australian Ballet Administration seems to be wilfully conservative.

First performances with enlarged pit.



Eileen Houston (Cherubino), Isabel Buchanan (Countess Almaviva) and Glynn Purnell (Bartolo) in AO's *Marriage of Figaro*. Photo: Bruno Giacca

Woolly of course — no new production matched the first three weeks of the Australian Opera's major winter season, which opened at the Sydney Opera House on Wednesday, June 14.

Indeed, it was even being cruelly alleged in some quarters of the daily press that the real opera drama of the moment was off stage rather than on, focussed on the threash of a takeover bid staged by a few doctored in the opera world at the annual general meeting of the AO the following night.

But it turned out to be a month far from devoid of artistic success, even if the first new production of the season, and one of the undoubted highlights of the year, at least in prospect — *Ivanhoe* — was not scheduled to open till July 5.

Even at opening, in the certain knowledge that opening performances are never any season's best, both *Mothia's Butterfly* and *The Marriage of Figaro* were very good indeed. *Figaro* was undoubtedly the better of the two, that was only to be expected in view of the fact it is perhaps the company's most universally acclaimed production and has been consistently in

the repertory for seven years.

The only newspaper in the opening night cast was Eileen Houston as Cherubino, but there were considerable improvements to be noted in the performances of several of the old hands — in particular, that of Isabel Buchanan's Countess.

It is hard to know where to start in talking about this *Figaro*. For the greatest strength of the 1971 John Copley production eight from the start has been teamwork, and that is still its greatest strength. Good to begin with well above the Australian Opera's general performing level of the time, it has steadily gained in stature over since. Each individual performer has grown over the years; as any performer worth his salt always necessarily does, and at the same time the collective depth of the combined interpretation has developed steadily.

I have seen the particular Copley production eight times so far. All eight times with Ronald MacNaughton as Figaro, John Prentiss as the Count and Robert Farber as Marcellina. Neil Warren Smith has done as of my Bartolo, Robert Gurd for Dr Basilio, and Glynn

Purnell four of the Susanna — in each case including the first and the last. I saw Isabella Birmingham seven times straight as Cherubino before that year's performance by Houston.

What one considers that those eight performances were spread over eight years and that no more than two of them fell in any one year, that is remarkable stability of casting indeed, but far from resulting in stiffness and monotony in performance the very stability of this *Figaro* cast has resulted in a fairly steady casting tradition.

Fortunately, the old hands have long since so completely mastered their respective roles that the next that could be expected of them this year or last, was that they should maintain and slightly refine previous excellence, and that is precisely what they have done. Thus the most fascinating performances of this particular opening night to me at least were Isabel Buchanan's Countess and Eileen Houston's Cherubino — though for quite different reasons.

Burton had bothered me when she first played the Countess two years ago. She sang beautifully as she has always

done since she has been with the Australian Opera, but she failed to convince me she had the role under control dramatically as she has always had, for instance, *Susanna* under control in *The Magic Flute*. This year she is singing extra more beautifully than before and including those treble aria's with considerably more self-confidence. But far more important from the point of view of the overall dramatic racism of the evening, she has acquired in the interim the extra stage expression necessary to be convincing as the ever so slightly elevated and aristocratic and dignified woman she must be if she is to contrast satisfactorily with Barbara's less sophisticated & I equally affected sort of weariness.

Huiqian qualifies for some sort of *Figaro* versatility prize in my recent performance awards, for I saw her do three Barbaras in this AO production, as well as an excellent Susanna in *Abduction* earlier this year, before she stepped up as Cherubino. It was no surprise that she succeeded almost totally as Cherubino just as she had succeeded almost completely as Susanna (Barbara's hardly a big enough role to warrant an attempt at assessment of comparative standards).

And after having spent a good deal of time talking about the vocal refinements of the *Figaro*, it is only fair to conclude with a brief account for conductor Richard Bonynge and the Australian Sydney Orchestra, which responded by and large magnificently in his sensitive direction to any conceivable triumph — in this as unequivocally was — the conductor must inevitably claim a significant share of the credit for putting together the fragmented bits of excellence of individual performances, and making them into a coherent whole.

One vocal complaint, though a strangely non-all-place pillar, in the Easter Island style, involving a rather large orchestra fully aimed directly at the audience, seems to have infiltrated itself into Act IV in the aftermath of the fire which destroyed the original *Figaro* sets earlier this year.

The winter season opened, of course, with a revival of last year's *Butterfly* which started off most magnificently but ended up on a most moving level. Despite the best efforts of Carlo Felice Cillario, who was running the boxes, the SOO's last act was very sloppy at detail; the last brash reading of Puccini's quotation from the American national anthem was really pugno enough to make any self-respecting patriotic American feel a need to stand up and protest.

But things improved dramatically in the second act, with beautifully rich Puccini strong songs coming out from the newly enlarged opera theatre pit in an overwhelming current of melody, and by the end, aided by stunning vocal performances from the two leading ladies, the end of Act I had all but been erased from memory.

Two leading ladies in a *Butterfly*? Yes, for much of the credit for the success of that particular opening night must be attributed to Jennifer Beringham's deliciously amateur Susanna, which acted as

a magnificently told for Leon Mitchell's Cho Cho San. I was not as aware of Mitchell's tremendous vocal power this year as last, when she made quite a stunning vocal impression before she even appeared on stage during effortlessly over the top of the off-stage chorus, but there was no doubt at all power when it was needed, and her acting performance was fascinating in its minute detail as well as — in the final moments — the greater gestures of impatience and tragedy. She still does too much crowing about after her soloistic kohl threat, but a good deal less than year than last, just about none at all would be even better.

Beringham provided a deeply sympathetic feel to Michele, as she must if Madame Butterfly is to transcend the tear-jerker trap opera. She sang the role much more effectively than last year, equally as important, her interpretation was superb throughout.

While it was pleasingly sung, by and large, Lamberto Pavarotti's *Pagliacci* only occasionally rose to life dramatically; admittedly, he was hampered by a temporary limp at opening night, but there was a good deal more to it than that. Pavarotti is not entirely lacking in depth of character, but needs to learn to develop

from thoughtlessness to remorse, as to reflect how he has destroyed Buttitta. That progression was virtually absent from Pavarotti's performance.

Robert Alton's *Sheppherd* was solidly being and well sung, though he seemed to have some difficulty with some of his top notes on the night.

These performances were the first staged in the open theatre of the Sydney Opera House since the enlargement of its orchestra pit at a cost of a several hundred thousand dollars — and it is pleasing to be able to report that the results seem to meet that probably even that large expenditure.

The pit is, well less than optimum, of course, and has yet not been put to the sort of test which will crop up in mid-August when Wagner's *The Mastersingers of Nuremberg* opens. But as well as enlarging the pit, the recent renovation opened up its top somewhat by the installation of wire mesh across a portion of the backstage, and the improvement in terms of directness of sound, particularly for those sitting in the stalls area, is dramatic. The directions of orchestral sound caused to them by the pit/take balance during Act I of *Butterfly*, but performers quickly adjusted to the new rebuff balance of the house and the balance since has been near-perfect.



Leon Mitchell as Cho Cho San in AO's *Madame Butterfly*.
Photo: William Munday.

Sydney Film Festival : Australasian opposites

The only Australian film in the Sydney Festival apart from *The Night the Hunter* which opened the fortnight's proceedings, was James Ricketson's *Third Person Plural*. It was made in a few weeks for \$25,000, which is a sum for somebody to say, "And that's just what it looks like". But in fact it doesn't look especially burned or under-financed. The locations are a harbourside park and playground, a yacht, a complex for old people of both sexes, and two modest apartments. The nearest thing to a star in the film is Bryan Brown, the interesting and quite subtle actor who is becoming known for several excellent performances, notably as the husband in Chris McQuaid's compensated young wife in *Lower Letters from Treacher Road*.

So in the sense that *Third Person Plural* is a modest movie made with people who have yet to draw a bargain in the market, it can be seen not to have demanded a lot of money. And it is not the lack of money that causes the film to almost fail, as it does. It is the lack of shape in the script, and the wacky, forced dialogue which constitutes most, designed to confuse rather than clarify. And it is true that certain people speak in words and sentences which are merely an approximation of what they are trying to say, that they are repetitive and banal. There is a way of using such speech in certain contexts, if severely refined, it can be made to work. In this case it doesn't work.

The story is a simple probable one. A man named Terry has a boat which sleeps four. His spouse has divided Mark, a biologist whose subject is ants, aboard for a weekend with Dianne, a schoolteacher who loves to make socially committed films of old people and Beth, a young wife and mother claimed to be an architect. The architect is also unaged, but isn't made it to be staying at home with the small child. The only one used to the boat is Terry, an antisocial or perhaps show-off would be a better word. They crash ashore at the harbour, eat watermelon, drink chrysopanax, pump, talk but say nothing. Dianne works on Mark. Terry and Beth break into a brawl. When the weekend is over Beth wants the lone-flat to continue but not on the same terms. She contemplates leaving her husband, to Terry's embarrassment. Mark and Dianne make it to base bar with sex, the former has with sonorous "concern".

And so on. Earlier in the Festival, Ricketson's *Dogbag* reached the shortlist of Grauman Usman Pottan's candidates, and won a commendation from the Pottan Manuscript Award judges and in fact the style of both films is mannered, unconvincing, lame, addled talk, a case in which the characters seemed to be interchangeable. It was pointed out to me later that the four principals of *Third Person Plural* had a curious physical synchrony their four noses were long noses. When they leaned together over the watermelon they bent a

resemblance to four antennae. Experienced directors would have looked around for a much poor And, incidentally, none of a distinctive nature. In radio the voices would perhaps materialise through the voices would but in film voices are important.

James Ricketson wrote the screenplay and directed the film. The unattractive photography is by Tom O'Byrne. The Australian Film Commission put up the money and was right to do so because Ricketson will undoubtedly make a good film when he starts telling his actors what to do and says and keeps a tighter rein on the whole enterprise.

In enormous contrast to Ricketson's lameness was the NZ film *Shipping Dogs*, which followed *Third Person Plural* on the same night. It is a piece of perky white-boy's own-paper adventure that brought whoops, cat calls, hoots and clapping from the audience in recognition of its splendid absurdity and a host of twenty credits from NZ Government institutions, all of which are pilloried and/or ridiculed in the film.

The film is the first fictional feature film made in NZ in eleven years and has done very well at home. I am told, before turning up at the Festival. The director is Roger Donaldson and the principal players Sam Peckin, Ian Mune (Menzies of the NZABC series) about a dozen leaders says last in 1976) Nevin Brown and the rating Americas actor, Warren Oates.

The story assumes that things go to hell in NZ — vicious petrol shortages etc — that the Maristines PMD set up an anti-terrorist militia force which in turn spawns a guerrilla and resistance movement. Heroes take to the hills, moving by night against Warren Oates' mercenaries. Such hell as Smith of an unspecified avocation chooses to retire to an island with his dog encouraged by the fact that his wife has ditched him for Helen played by Ian Mune, that is the apparent haven all hell breaks loose.

There are shootouts with bodies flying and a swimming pool, and spectacular chase. Smith and Helen escape the militia in a truck carrying fat lands for the slaughterhouse and then begin a long and agonising boozing trek through the bush. The ending of *Shipping Dogs*, if predictable, is also the occasion for a ludicrously attenuated death scene from Mune, whose talents need to be controlled by a stronger hand than Donaldson's. Mune shares the honour of the film script, taken from the novel *Smith's Dream* by CK Scott, with Arthur Bayley.

The script is full of holes, but with maya and vehicles and aircraft racing about in that magnificent New Zealand scenery it probably doesn't matter too much.



Margaret Cameron (Beth) and George Stevens (Terry) in *Third Person Plural*

Foreign Films

Probe Compromise and Inertia

Solrun Hoas

Limited to a non-stop first week only of the Sydney Film Festival, this view can fortunately cover some memorable low-key films that might otherwise be lost between Alan Parker's *Sabrina*, Ray, Lars von Trier or others of the second week.

Even after thirty films the first day leaves both for Krivanač Zanussi's *Cannibals*, a subtly vicious description of the unscrupulous machinations behind acting 'nobs' and seeking justice in a corrupt and swampy academic milieu, and for Nikita Mikhalkov's *An Unfinished Piece for a Merchant's Play*. Based on a very early Chekhov play *Platonov*, the name of its main character. For the Polish Zanussi 'truth' can be used as a camouflage for self-borrowed, decentres may in fact be evading rather than taking responsibility. Compromises is not a clear-cut grey, but mostly, and its boundaries often

In Chekhov's run-down country villa compromise is a way of life. The painful awakening to self-betrayal as Platonov, now a school teacher, is confronted by his former love Sofia who thought him a Russian Byron, leads nowhere. She has settled for a top-notch. Accusations and new yearnings but create another impasse. The meritable doctor puts off his emergency call for the welfare of many company. When the servants bring a pig to be ridden around the house, no one knows what to do with it; the pig is no longer an animal. When the carriage is ready for him to leave after finding his wife loves another, Sofya's husband falls asleep at the busking changes. But the humour in the already off-kilter is unsatisfactory on the film, it is the best acted Chekhov I have seen either on stage or screen (Alexander Kalyagin as Platonov is brilliant).

The next showed intelligent programing of films that allowed for comparison of style or theme. There were notable more films than usual by women directors than of them. Scandinavian, Norwegian Aina Rønne [*Wives*] disappointed that year with heavy-handed treatment of *Gender of Love* and *Loveless* based on Swedish author Hjalmar Söderberg. A few years ago Marianne Zellering showed in her *Die Gläser* that, with a greater sense of irony and humor, the seeming banality of the same author's dialogue can work. There is a certain cultural element of non-verbal communication and women's momentum



Craig Russell from *Outrageous*

but often reader Scandinavian films postpone (or also with Japanese *satire*) the real somewhat ambiguous but very complicated subject. In *Laila Mikkelsen's* controls that qualify and succeed to advantage in focusing on a young couple helping in a national crisis.

Gunnel Lindblom's *Paradise* *Play* is populated with articulate characters who can rationalise their emotions. It is the social matrons, Ring and her mother, who range. Despite no black outcome and social concern, there is no plodding tension. It brings a pacifistic approach to the problem of coping in a world of events that intensify. The theme of friendship between two older women with professional interests in common is not only rare in him, but here explored with the dramatic skill of a woman who has given Ingmar Bergman's film some of their strongest performances.

The concern with irreducible human tragedy typifies *Paradise*. *Play* is echoed in an animal Sartrean that followed it, *The Judas Kiss Still Far Away*, by Patricia Mertz. A film that grows at me in retrospect partly through the expressive performance of Isabelle Hippert, who projects acute anxiety and blocked despair through minimal expression in an environment of worms and bones. Often dwelling on long shots where little seems to happen, it necessitates the non-events of a week preceding the girl's suicide. Similarly, in *Death of a Lesser Salesman* Shula Shulevitz allows such slow the time it needs to record the isolation and instability in communications of her manipulator, as he reconstructs the routine of the week after the man's girlfriend disappears, and her body is found under his bed.

For film makers concerned with social

documentary and with self-reflexivity in film (often adopted through film on film making), perhaps the most significant of all was Richard Hand's *The Main Actor*, a film prompted by his previous *Pride and Prejudice*, in which an actual father and son act out their real-life conflicts on their poor barn. *The Main Actor* begins with the and at such a Human situation, the focus is on conflict between the exploiting Maukau, fascinated by the overt expression of aggressions in a social class other than his own, and the boy. Unwittingly a star exposed to the emerging power of the film medium, he is incapable of again submitting to his dominating father. As in many of the week's films, the audience is uninvolved. It is an important film here where commercial film on Aboriginal themes often works out tribal or outback tales.

After so many films with an obvious and didactic message, films that reflect the illusionary effects of cinema in order to had a more angle on contemporary reality, *Short and More* or *Cakewalk* provided a welcome change of pace. It makes its strong point about colonialism, the corrupting effect of power and the absurdity of war through caricature and satire and is a very impressive debut by Jean-Jacques Annaud, made in the Ivory Coast.

Judging by road response, the popular favorite of a Sydney audience with a penchant for style was *Outrageous*, a Canadian feature debut by Richard Berlin, perhaps a much-needed relief after a week of muted and blocked emotions. Incredibly entertaining, mainly due to Craig Russell's brilliant female impersonations, its message of living care as care all and 'Let's be mad and happy together' is somewhat trite and facile.

Bernard Herrmann: The Composer as Mimic



The disc entitled *The Mysterious Film World of Bernard Herrmann* (Discus, reissued World Record Club #49427) enables us to listen to extracts from the scores of three films in which Herrmann's music was especially linked with the weirdness of Ray Harryhausen's creation: gnomes, monsters and other special effects. In the music for *Mysterious Island* Herrmann sets his huge orchestra bowing to the motion of a giant balloon, evoking the nightmarish shudders of gigantic of a giant crab, engaged in comprehensive buzzing for a giant bee and ends an 18th century fugue through grotesquely amplified and distorted motions to accompany the appearance of an enormous bird. Oddball stuff, you may say. Perhaps, but Herrmann brings to its musical characterization highly developed technical skill and an awareness of what has happened and what is possible in music completely rarely rare among film composers. The 18th century fugue is said to be by a pupil of Bach, J.L. Rucki. As Kruba ceases crabs in Germany it might have been even more fitting if his fugue had been appropriated for the appearance of the giant crab, but we can't have everything. The sinking chime about the gnomes parts of Herrmann's music for *Mysterious Island* is how much more chilling they are than the canzon taken from another Harryhausen-Herrmann collaboration, *Jaws* and the *Amigoans*. There is a certain well-bronze irresistibility to the music accompanying the Man of Brass but the Triton who rises from the depths of the sea and hurls back the clashing rocks in order to let the Age through has not had a great deal of imagination put into his music. Writing music for monsters needs techniques which Herrmann has in plenty, but it obviously helps if the monsters have some additional visual characterization. If the Triton had had a lamp, for example, I am inclined to think that Herrmann would have found a more interesting musical equivalent for him. It is not unusual to Herrmann that he

music is mystery and that the more grotesque and nightmarish the image the better the mystery and the music. Herrmann's solution to the difficult problem of writing music for *The Three Worlds of Gulliver* (the other side of this disc) is to move and, on occasion, playfully distort the characteristic pace and turns of phrase of minor English composers of the 18th century. A sturdy minuet is identified with Gulliver's hometown of Whipping. The Lilliputians are accompanied by music scored with stony tightness and fragility of timbre. The 18th century touches are mildly interesting, and it is hardly fair to Herrmann to point out that they are immensely inferior in wit and colour to Stravinsky's riddling of 18th century themes and conventions in *Pulcinella*. I doubt whether the music for *The Three Worlds of Gulliver* has an audience truly independent of the film, despite its unusual formal shapeliness. The two movements in which Herrmann seems to speak visibly as a composer are, ingeniously concerned with monstrous chimes and the portrait by the fireengangs. Anyone who has an affectionate memory of these films and who already admires the scope of Herrmann's work as a film composer will probably argue that this, all the more so as the music for it was newly recorded by the National Philharmonic Orchestra under Herrmann's own expert direction.

The question lurking at the back of many listeners' minds when they consider the film music of a composer like Herrmann whose technique is consistently professional and whose general culture is well tried to go something like this: what sort of music would he write if there were no film to go with it? Herrmann stands up to such an inquiry better than most composers who have written ingeniously for film. He had already written a number of his best concert works at the time that he began composing for

film and the impulse to compose such works went on for at least a year after his film career began. His Symphony (I take it that it is his only completed score from 1941. He had made his first appearance as a composer for feature films a year earlier, very suggestively, with the score for Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane* (There are two dozen at least of this music, on a United Artists record of the original soundtrack and one recently recorded by the National Philharmonic Orchestra under Charles Gerhardt for EMI). Herrmann went on to work with, among others, Trafalgar and Hitchcock. His association with Hitchcock was especially long and intensive. There is a record devoted to his music for *Rear Window*, already played under the composer's direction, and a Decca recording brings together examples from Herrmann's music for five Hitchcock thrillers: *Vertigo*, *Marnie*, *North by Northwest*, *Vogues* and (in a recording dedicated to Hitchcock himself) *The Trouble with Harry*. The *Pigeon* score was for strings alone. Herrmann wrote for them most effectively as the bare connecting style of many of Stravinsky's compositions for strings. Note that I am only saying that Herrmann borrowed a style and much of it seem appropriate to his subject matter, not that he was indulging in plagiarism. (The borrowing from Stravinsky in *The Pigeon* is to be found in the music for *Ari*, in contrast, seems to me much closer to a straight pastiche.) I think Herrmann may be most at ease in his mastery of a style as clearly defined as no-classic Stravinsky. In the *Symphony*, left to his own devices, Herrmann shows less consistency of style or personality. Yet the *Symphony* has nothing about it of the stiff-expertise sort of a composer who only comes alive in relation to a screen image. The eleven notes generate Scherzo. Even if that comparison can be sustained with any exactness only in brief passages of the score, the *Symphony* (Discus reissued World Record Club #49427) does have the tone of epic on stage. Herrmann clearly had a great impulse to musical expression and if he needed the specific relevance of a film or of other kinds of situation, with such as his operas *Walküre*, *Ringtafel* or his dramatic cantata *Abra*, (both) in order to give that impulse meaningful definition. The *Symphony* has scale, sweep and some good ideas. I am inclined to think that the most successful movement is the most nightmaresch: a scherzo which is like a nightmare itself and which draws part of its impact from a grotesque variant on the scherzo of Beethoven's seventh symphony. It is Beethoven with a lamp and a handback. Herrmann is characteristically, the music but, equally characteristically, needs something grotesque to bring out the best in his mystery.

Play texts not the proper basis for theatre?

Ghosts At "Three Theatre Mandarins"
By Steven Berkoff
Fight for Stolen Art Peter Cheeseman,
Matthews
The Coal Mine Robert Merritt, Courtney
Perry
Plays published by Matthews, Calder and
Pergamon

gambit



32

Reviews / Books

Reviews

Books

Does theater have a single creator, or the way poetry and painting have? It is obviously a collaborative activity (like building a monument or performing a symphony) but should it have a single guiding "artist"? All the best known actor-centred companies in modern Western theater are closely identified with a leader/director — Jerry Grossman, Julian Beck and Judith Malina, Joseph Chaikin, Joan Littlewood and, now in this country, Steven Berkoff. After all the furore of the last century with texts and directors we are heading back to the dictatorship of the leading actor — albeit justified on the claim that something grounds that the company of actors being "up front", are the collaborative true creators of the performance.

Steven Berkoff is the first of his "Three Theatre Mandarins" in *Gambari 32* (which also includes the text of his [Alfonso-piano] after Kafka) whom that the actor "is more interesting than the author" and that the playwright, "like a producer, seeks for less flesh to give form, blood heat, flesh and interpretation to his grubby thoughts". Like Grossman, Berkoff appeals to the argument that the actor can exist without the play but not the play without the actor. This begs the question,

Whatever the action do between the play — it still doesn't meet the issue, what's a good way of making plays? One answer, undoubtedly, Berkoff's way. He is a theatrical author who, far from demonstrating the primacy of the actor, demonstrates the primacy of Berkoff. As actor, author and director he creates performances as a single artist, whatever collaboration creates effect he may get from his company.

For illustration we have the annoying fact that his text, *Moscowphobia*, reads superbly. This is partly because it evokes Kafka's story, and partly because it is a description of a production rather than a prescription for one as yet unrealized. In deference to the Amardian view, referred to by Berkoff, that playwrights are not the proper basis for the theater I can say no more, other than that I will seem empty until I see his production of this great story at Stratford later this year.

The script of *Fight For Stolen Art* (Matthews) is even more uncompromisingly a record of production, not of all-round art direction. It is the annotated text of one of the documentary productions of the Victoria Theatre in Stoke-on-Trent, under the direction of Peter Cheeseman. It deals with the threat to close down the Stoke-on-Trent works, and the struggle of the local workers to prevent it. Again we learn the problem that Peter Cheeseman is well known as the leader of this company but in this case there does seem to have been genuine creative collaboration. Cheeseman proudly announces, "the words you see should to read were not written by me, or by the actors, but by the men and women who work at Stoke-on-Trent, and some of the workers' wives."

This attitude is failing so far behind in covering the books received by Theatre Australia that a great number must be done at once. That is just as well, as the rest of these books lend suspiciously to the like playscripts, by playwrights. In Australia, on the whole, theater still operates on the basis of a handful of artistic directors choosing playscripts to produce, but those people will no doubt have already made their decisions on these plays, so all I can do is present them for the consideration of potential readers.

These plays, then, also run.

The Coal Mine by Robert J. Merritt (Courtney Press) is a study of the lives of aborigines in a NSW country town. It has obvious political intent, but its lowkey, generally naturalistic style, while very moving, seems to preclude its having much political impact. As an aside I return to the comments above. I admit that the memory of Justice Saunders' fine performance as Baby in the original production contributes a lot to reading the play. Howard Breinton's *Arama Derra* (Matthews) is yet another reminder of how much we could learn from this great

playwright. Like Bruno Koehn's *A Mad World*, *My Mother's Milkhead* it was originally performed by the John Stark Theatre Group and is a comic pageant of English life. New plays which deserve much more attention than I can give them here are Howard Barker's *Sergeant* and *Clue* (Caldwell Playwrights' 79), and Alan Brown's *Wheatsheaf With Kidder Play* (script 80) in Matthews' Master Playwright series; we have *Play One* of Edward Bond, which contains *Saved*, *Early Morning* and *The Paper's Wedding*.

Finally there are the "why not?" plays. I cannot think of any reason why the following plays should not have been published: Michael Frayn's *Claudi Matthaeus* and *Alphabetical Order*, and Donley's *Travis* (Matthews); and David Mervin's television scripts, *Hungry Bear* and other plays are all very funny. Penguin's volume of *Three Plays* (Waldie's *The Long and The Short* and *The Tall*, Michael Hastings' *Fit* and *After* and Doris Lessing's *Each Man Owns His Own*) is worth getting if only for an unexpected page 154. Harley Granville-Barker's *The Shadow House* was revived last year at the National so we can expect to see it at the Old Town shortly.

Except for *The Coal Mine* all these plays are English.



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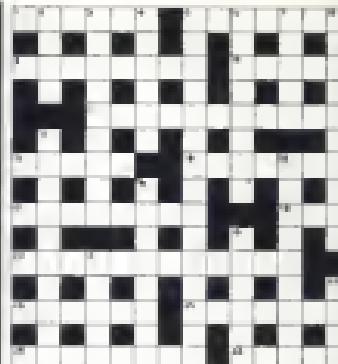
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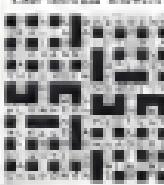
Across:

- Rolling stones might... (6)
- Three are when you next applied (8)
- Where Brook the Afternoons began (10)
- Feeling after a heavy night (9)
-, limp replaced gas (12)
- "I can call spirits from the ____ deep" [Henry IV Pt II] (5)
- The teeth of a wench (8)
- The _____, sleek, gay and short story by Abbé de Basily (9)
- All the _____ girls love a tuxedo (6)
- Playing with intent (12)
- What the writer Virgil said of women (11)
- Clauses in simple names (3)
- Sacred Waldensian here loses valuable article in become aware (6)
- "In due course measures _____ to these end" Shakespeare sonnet (6)

Down:

- A very wrong (8)
- The type of performance Stanislavski shows for (6)
- Show (5)
- St Andrew's earth shattering mistake (13,13)
- Are these ever beaten with banners? (3)
- Shakespeare's archaic word for dark continent (5)
- Above the door in theatre (4,6)
- Blandy make-up artist (10)
- Sweet, brazen enticement for queen (3,4)
- How the Australians went to sea (2,1,1)
- May have one house and be open (6)
- _____, should not be played in a home with anyone in it" [Director Maxine Davies] (5)
- Script'd or full of scenes (6)

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